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EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE TO WILL.

BY

ELLEN E. ELLIS,

Of Auckland, N. Z.

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PREFACE.

FICTION is crowded with startling incidents; real life is grandly uneventful, and life, ennobled by suffering, is lived at such cost to all that is unlovely in character, as to become sacred history to those who have not lost faith in a late repentance, perceiving how long it takes to work out the meaning of the one word Duty—duty to one's self, to one's neighbor, and, above all, to one's God. To such the present narrative will have a sacredness as deep as sin and sorrow unfeigned can make it. To profit by life's lessons, good and bad, will make the world better, not worse—richer, not poorer. Hence, a husband and wife, erring grievously, though in a different way—the one rushing down to ruin, the other struggling through mental darkness to daybreak, but in such a conventional manner as to make the struggle worthless, except to those who can see the elements of growth in it—seek to make their bitter experience useful to their fellows.

Written especially for working women, by one of themselves, the narrative and its reflexions have been patiently elaborated with the "Line upon line, precept *upon precept*" simplicity needful to the untaught

notwithstanding that conciseness of word and thought appeal more forcibly to the cultivated mind.

Right is might, and for right's sake alone the woman question is brought under consideration, because the women, whose thoughtful disinterestedness makes them strangely wise, as occasion serves them, both in public and in private life, are crippled by their enforced ignorance and degraded social position (as the narrative attempts to prove) in their God-given work to bless mankind. To woman's ignorance—her capabilities having never yet been fairly gauged—and social degradation are mainly due the growing ruffianism of youth lapsing into barbarism ; for so long as the chief seats of learning remain closed against woman, as if she were unworthy or incapable (or both) of a liberal education, she will, of course, fail to command the respect of beings treated as her superiors. What is good for man is good for woman ; and the fear, expressed in various ways, that given a liberal education woman will forget herself, and assume the masculine position and functions, evidences a lamentable ignorance of and want of faith in woman. The really good are good under all circumstances, and it is well to demand that woman shall be woman in all she says and does ; but given an honorable, responsible position ("rights" clearly involve duties and responsibilities), she will become the more, not the less, modest and retiring. Experience proves that her influence, unwisely restricted thus far, is on the side of virtue ; woman has realised—as man has failed to do, or *legalised infamy* were impossible—that vice indulged *is death to a condition* of individual and national hap-

piness and prosperity. Supported, however, by reason and justice a healthy public opinion is omnipotent; and let public opinion pronounce woman *free to do the right.* Whether her legal freedom be or be not assured is comparatively of small moment.

When man is as wise as nature is wise, he will readily perceive that intelligent goodness—moral sunshine, as opposed to unreasoning impulse and empty professions—is destined by a subtle alchemy, analogous to the decomposition and decay ever going on in the vegetable world in which flowers and fruits thrive, so to live down all wrong as finally to supplant evil by good. It follows, therefore, that unfaithfulness to one's cherished convictions is much more widely corrupting than is the viciousness of the vicious. Character, not money, is wealth; true courage is moral and intelligent. Hence, down to this hour *Spartan* is the synonym of all that is manly and enduring, and unless the men of to-day begin in earnest to cultivate "hardy nerves," *i.e.*, the courage to live for something better than gold, the Spartan character will live on when this poor, limp nineteenth-century character of ours has sunk into deserved oblivion.

Rightly appreciated one really good man is stronger than 10,000 bad men; and if good men knew their power they would so combine their forces as to become what they ought to be, but are not, a terror to evil-doers. Man does not sin from ignorance; there is no arbitrary power independent of himself compelling him to sin. He knows right from wrong, and—other things being just and reasonable—if he deliberately *chooses the wrong he* must bear the consequences. The

attempt to screen the guilty has filled the world so full of all kinds of immoralities that the truth is hated by almost whomsoever uttered. Man, however, is human and plastic in woman's hands; he believes that he will not tolerate this, that, and the other form of dictation, simply because no master-mind has as yet arisen to defy all precedent, and utter the truth for the love of it. But such mind will arise.

If reckless dissipation is happiness unalloyed, it is wise to pursue such a life; fortunately, however, no argument is needed to convince even the depraved, who will have the gratification of the passions at all cost, that such a life down to its wretched end disappoints at every step. They must learn, nevertheless, that even their remorseful seasons, sincerely bitter while they last, mean nothing if they end in nothing.

The instant a man wills to be good, God opens the way—nay, the way is ever open. The will is absolute, for good and for evil, as is proved by the present narrative, wherein the disciplined will is seen slowly to work out its own salvation; whereas the perverse will, boldly defiant of God and man, to a degree which a healthy public opinion would make impossible, is wrecked, but dies not—the man lives again! It is impossible to over-estimate the power of the will. So certain is it that a greater strength of will is required to do wrong than right ("Heaven kindly gave our blood a moral flow"), that it becomes daily more and more imperative to speak of and treat the bad man as *wilful*, rather than "*weak*."

The average woman is better than the average man; *anarchy would result* from her present social condition

if she were not, and to the few, of both sexes, who love the truth it will be welcome in any form. Hence, however much the spirit, purpose, and unrestrained naturalness of the writer may surprise conventional prejudices, the book, if wisely read by woman only, will, by awakening thought, probably mark an epoch in her history, since she will understand what is meant by strength of will. And if the book be "wild" to English taste, the fault will be in the taste to those who love wild flowers!

"As you sow you reap." Is this true? Look at life! history and experience teach the very opposite. If you give and take haphazard, cultivate lying as one of the fine arts of marketable value, float down stream flattering and flattered by the vanity and conceit of men, you will reap as you sow unquestionably. But if you are better than other men, can afford to be misunderstood, are strong enough to stand alone—if suffering has so whetted the finer sensibilities that the night side of nature has become sufficiently light about your path to make its presence felt by all with whom you come in contact, you must pay the penalty, sow your good things to reap the world's evil things. It ever has been so, and ever will be perhaps. Bad men hate the man who bears no mark.

The one point the writer seeks above aught else to emphasise is, that notwithstanding their flagrant inconsistencies—and they are flagrant, and their sectarian jealousies most childish—the professedly good everywhere are on Christ's side, as opposed to the men of the world, the men of unbridled passions, whose sneering contempt of the professedly good (not unmerited)

is becoming daily more pronounced. Once inspire men with an enthusiasm for personal goodness, and sectarianism will fall, and they will unite heart and soul to work with God to frustrate the designs of bad men.

And looking only to the life that *is*, the writer would say to woman with all the impassioned earnestness of which she is capable: If honor is dear to you, if child is dear to you, if life and country are dear to you, choose ye whom ye will serve—the bad, who will ruthlessly sacrifice yourselves and your children to their lusts, or the good, who, with all their faults, are yet struggling onwards and upwards.

Auckland, New Zealand.

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE TO WILL.

CHAPTER I.

A TARGET.

We must not hope to be mowers,
  And to gather the ripe gold ears,
Until we have first been sowers,
  And water'd the furrows with tears.

It is not just as we take it—
  This mystical world of ours;
Life's field will yield, as we make it,
  A harvest of thorns or flowers!

ON a grassy knoll, beneath wide-spreading elms, sits Zela—or Zee, as she is commonly called—a girl of some nine or ten summers. She is in a brown study of no pleasing character, judging by the rueful expression of her countenance, as, gazing on vacancy with a rapt, see-nothing look, thoughts well up in her active, chaotic brain, so nimbly as to tread on each other's heels. A pile of books lies in her lap, and on them she muses, fitfully, in a truant hope of learning her lessons.

Hark! a rustling is heard among the dry leaves, and listening, with eyes and ears alert, the easily-diverted student espies a squirrel. Down go the books, and off bounds Zee, almost as swiftly as her friend, nor halts till she has reached the tall pine up which the squirrel has gone, and to him she calls, with many endearing names; but the rogue can set her at defiance from the tree-top, whence he looks perkily down into her upturned face.

Retracing her steps, she collects her scattered books, and indulging her habit of thinking aloud, she blurts *out impetuously*, as she flops down on the

knoll : "What's the good of this big world, with nothing but lessons all the time? Why don't girls go to school out in the woods, such a lot of live lesson-books as there are here? If I were a bird or a butterfly, I'd spoil all the lesson-books I could find. Out here in the woods everything is plain, but nowhere else; I'm all in a muddle, and can't get out of it. Bother the lessons! there is no beginning, no end to them; no one will teach me how to learn them, because I'm a 'dunce.'" Her head drops, and she weeps piteously, overweighted with grief for the time being. But the April sky soon clears, and furtively raising her eyes from her books, she is at her old work again, warring with her surroundings, fighting ghosts of her own creating, an unchildlike moodiness prompting her to hide away in a little world all to herself.

She has a genius for discovering fairy-bowers in the out-of-the-way nooks in which her native place abounds. The spot in which her acquaintance is made is one of her "parlors," with "beautiful trees for walls;" the earth is carpeted with long grass; to her right is a sandy bank, dotted with primroses and violets, and at her feet ripples a shallow brook, in which she ever and anon dabbles. The air is fragrant and full of melody, the birds are singing their "Good-night" hymn. Well the songsters understand the laws of harmony, and wait on each other with exquisite taste; there is no discord, though a dozen small throats are swelling with joyful notes. A keen perception of the beautiful arrays Zee's fancy realm in rainbow hues; Nature is her inspiration, and, jumping into the good dame's triumphal car, Zee is whirled whither she will.

Beside her, laid reverently down, is a bunch of violets neatly fringed with their own green leaves, a peace-offering for Miss Pout on the morrow—the one of her two governesses, the Misses Smirke and Pout, of whom Zee is in mortal dread, though she knows no fear of bogie or of darkness. The pick of everything presentable which falls to her lot is laid with a lowly *curtsey* on the altar of her frowning deity; but Zee *has to learn that such* virtue is its own reward; Miss

Pout is not to be bought—at least, by Zee; try how she would to win a smile, her offerings failed to propitiate; "black Monday" lasted all the week.

With one twentieth the labor her sisters acquitted themselves with honor, receiving from Miss Pout the coveted smile of approval; while on Zee fell cutting reproof, perhaps a ringing box on the ear or slap on the bare shoulders, making her every nerve vibrate under a sense of shame. School-days, with their hopes deferred and pains realised, are, it is said, our "happiest days;" a sorry look-out for a "dunce" like Zee, who breasted the full tide of her stupidity alone, for she could keep pace with no class, and was therefore relegated to assistant teachers. Miss Pout rarely condescended to notice "such a dunce," but if she did tell Zee to "bring her books," her name from those dread lips made an Irish stew of her lessons, and the girl stood before her governess like a scared silly goat. Out in the woods she could, now and then, repeat a lesson exultingly. But to look in that stern face and think of a word was out of the question, Miss Pout insisted, of course, that Zee had not looked at her lessons when, in truth, they had absorbed all her play-hours.

Late at night and at early morn she pored over her books, sleeping on them, in a vague hope that some beneficent fairy would whisper her lessons to her in her dream; but, alas, with sunrise came the horrid drudgery of learning them as best she could. Time faileth us to tell how many of her "gay and girlish hours" were spent in the stocks, holding the back-board, or swinging the dumb-bells as punishment for "returned lessons;" whereas, to learn "disgrace lessons" she was "kept in" on bread and water. Imagine an awkwardly shy girl standing in the stocks, in the middle of a large schoolroom, with a plate of dry bread and a mug of cold water in her hands, of which bread and water she was to eat and drink, and to pick up every crumb she might chance to drop. Ah, how she longed to cram the bread down Miss Pout's throat, wishing, *the while, it might* choke her. Zee knew, too, that

some seventy-odd pairs of mischievous eyes were enjoying a giggle at her expense; as nudging and twitting her unmercifully, the owners of the all-seeing eyes asked on the sly: "How d'you like dunces' fare?" The flash of Zee's eye and the color of her cheek may be guessed; but, tiny-tit in the talons of the hawk, she took it all quietly, if not meekly.

Her troubles, moreover, followed her home, whither she carried a note from Miss Pout, requesting that her "downright obstinacy" might receive further chastisement from her father. A broad hint was given as to the purport of the note, but goosie never dreamed of losing it; nor, indeed, would it have served her turn, since her sisters received strict injunctions to tell their parents what Zee's "conduct" had been. So, note in hand, the girl slunk alone under the shadow of the houses, feeling certain that "you're in disgrace" was printed in capital letters all over her. After a severe reprimand from her father, such days ended in her being sent to bed, drowned in tears, on a bread and water supper. Her sisters made satisfactory progress, hence the faith of her parents in her lady teachers, whose school was unequalled for well twining youthful twigs, was boundless. Indeed, so busy was the home in which Zee's lot was cast, that there was no time to note that the shoe pinched any one particular child.

Zee could scramble through hedges and up trees of a come-at-able size in quest of a nest; why not up the tree of knowledge? No thought of young ladyism deterred her, she only wished that girls dressed like boys; frocks would tell tales of climbing. But, oh, dear! if a nest of young birds were secured, the wee pets invariably died in the night of the "pinch." Plying mamma with questions as to what the "pinch" might mean, boy and girls contemplated the fate of their unfledged darlings with blank dismay; little did they think, simple souls, that the father was the medicine-man. Then, too, Zee could make-believe in the story-line more than a little; her perceptions being the *clearer* through not being over much clogged with *learning, her* ways of looking at things and her ideas

generally were wholly a matter of intuition, although, despite her duncehood, she revelled in the choice juvenile literature of her day—"Jack-the-Giant-Killer," and such like stories, she devoured wholesale. One or other of these books might have been found thrust down the bosom of her dress, above which the too-obtrusive volume peeping, not unfrequently betrayed the heedless girl to Miss Pout, who levied black-mail *instanter*.

Some folk cannot see an inch before them; Zee, on the contrary, sees too much, and seeing at a glance how much is required of her, the little she might have accomplished became impossible. She was never told that, little by little, day by day, the whole would gradually be acquired; she could have given the sense of her lessons, as do the youth of to-day, though she could not sufficiently focalise her powers to commit words, possessing no meaning to her dormant faculties, to memory; there was, in fact, too little of the parrot about her to learn readily by rote; and yet, she evidenced a surprising aptitude in garnering information from all which transpired around her.

Frisky and tricky, withal, much of the wrong in the school may have been laid at her door; yet never was there a more innocent scapegoat. She liked Miss Pout too well at a distance to play pranks with her or her belongings; there was no chance of stealing a march upon her; indeed, suspicious of evil, she sniffed mischief in the air, and nipped it in the bud. One article of her creed, suggestive of cunning and duplicity, in reference to culprits, was: "No one is ever found out the first time." Thus, by scenting Lucifer a long way off, her young ladies were in danger of being "possessed;" yet were they models of propriety compared to the modern miss in-her-teens.

Deep down out of sight, Zee nursed the conviction that Miss Pout delighted to heap insult and indignity upon her, but she really may have caused her more anxious thought than did any other scholar; it was impossible to look in the bright, young face, and write her down an "idiot." Being ignorant of all modes of developing natural gifts, Miss Pout

elie ved in the cramming system; and, in refusing to be crammed, Zee left her at her wit's end. Nevertheless, bend or break was this lady's inflexible decree, and to have to deal with a sapling tough enough to rebound under the high pressure brought to bear upon it was a new and bitter experience doubtless; and resenting the failure of her belauded "system" of moulding the young idea, Miss Pout may have emptied the vials of her wrath on the head of the hapless Zela.

For Miss Smirke, Zee had a grain of respect; though she, too, believed in the cramming system, she was less cruel with it; there was, however, one threat she held over the girl's head with torturing effect. Pointing to a mysterious parcel on the top of a corner cupboard in the schoolroom, she would say, with alarming emphasis: "I'll have the steel collar taken down and fastened round your neck, miss; you incorrigible dunce!" This was misery's climax, for a notion obtained among the girls that the neck came out of the steel collar all awry, the head hind-side foremost. This star-chamber implement had never been seen; the girls believed in it nevertheless, nor could Lucifer himself have tempted one of them to have touched that mysterious parcel. Furthermore, Miss Smirke repeatedly upbraided Zee before the whole school with "picking her father's pocket by being such an incorrigible dunce"—a taunt that cut Zee to the quick; yet even while she winced, she was inwardly ready with the retort: "You, not I, are the pick-pocket. I could learn if you would but teach me in the right way."

After having been kept perseveringly at school for many long years, Zee's parents were told by Miss Smirke that "it was simply picking their pockets to keep such a dunce at school," which really meant that the square girl would not fit the round hole. So the Misses Smirke and Pout washed their hands of her with loud-sounding regrets, being denied the gratification of pointing to Zee as "finished *in our seminary*." The light that was in her concerning *book-lore* was darkness which could be

felt; she failed to learn because her mind was already full to repletion.

Zee's is a dual nature strongly marked; will it prove gold or dross? Would you like to see her, poor timid fawn, with all a tiger's fierceness? She is no doll-cherub, but living, quivering flesh and blood, with long gaunt limbs that will come too far through her frocks. She is a tall "dunce;" so much the worse for her. Her head is small, and over a good open brow, too lofty for a woman, waves glossy black hair, falling in natural curls round her well-formed shoulders; hazel eyes, full of fire and frolic, express the ever-varying emotions of the soul, and her nut-brown complexion is healthfully rosy. But, alas! that we must confess it, she has no nose, or, to say the least, it is like herself, "peculiar." Hence, those who admire Vauxhall misses of wafer-like superficiality and skin-deep prettiness will dismiss Zee with a shrug, since, to this shallow age, a nose is as necessary as a grandmother of ancient pedigree. Zee can boast of the latter, though not of the former. Nose or no nose, however, our cottage girl is to be presented with rustic simplicity. We have seen gardens laid out with patrician state, but to us they are not half so sweet as the cotter's well-kept plot of ground, where the cabbage and the lily grow side by side.

We envy not the clods of earth who can see no form nor comeliness in Zee's mind. Mind, indeed! those who know her best doubt whether she has one, and to such her mind is a sealed book; yet hers is no barren soul: she is open to impressions, though not to instruction, as then imparted. As shaggy without and within as a Shetland pony, she is a forlorn hope to herself and to her friends, who can make nothing of the inexplicable girl of the untamable soul. Put on her mettle, she goes great lengths, yet an instinctive sense of right pulls her up, so that she is not more often betrayed into youthful excesses than are her more proper sisters, who make a smooth path to their feet by smilingly accepting *all things* as they are. Whereas Zee's path

is strewn with sharp flints, which she fretfully hurls at others because they cut her own feet; yet would she not knowingly set foot upon a worm. Her one fault to the artificial is, that she has more faith in herself than in others; nevertheless, the shrine at which she offers sacrifice is as shapeless and ruthless as an Indian's. Singular in all she says and does, she is seasonable in nothing, yet asks to be appreciated *as she is*, without a hope of being understood, because of a prevailing disingenuousness, against which her fiery young soul revolts with fierce impatience. Defiance flashing in her eye and attitude, nothing shapes itself to her liking, and she bows to conventionalism with ill grace, provoking hostility, instead of winning love. "Dunce" though she was, had she been less intractable she would have doubtless received more consideration at the hands of all.

Because soulless children are easily managed, parents elect to have their children as much alike as peas in a pod; an ignoble self-love, as deep-rooted as virulent, refusing to die to self sufficiently to make variety welcome. And it is unthankful work to disturb conventionalism's despotic sway; men of little faith look with evil eye on the angel that agitates the pool; yet are myriads of the mentally impotent now waiting for the troubling of the waters of a higher, truer, life for youth and age; into which waters they will presently plunge and bring up gems from the ocean of thought, Living seed shall never die, however slow of growth. Sow it broadcast! the fertilising sun and shower shall produce its harvest of rich fruit.

Zee did not make herself; God knows what he is about; the twists and curls of character, so hateful to the superficial, are wisely intwined; so excellent, indeed, that it were unwise to rule off the irregularities; the very knots are beautiful when polished, and in the polishing of them the child who is to carve his own niche in the temple of life will need the encouragement of warmest sympathy. And there are *so few, even at this* hour, able to discriminate between *the child* who can learn but will not, and the child

who would learn but cannot, that the latter is too often sadly persecuted.

Take heart of grace, little dunce, wherever thou art: let not discouragement's icy touch congeal the warm current of thy blood and give thee heart-sickness. Use thy brains, child; look at life with wide-open eyes; ask the reason why of everything, and above all *think*—think earnestly about what thou art doing and find out the best way of doing it; then, though books be a dead language to thee, other and better knowledge than is possessed by the majority of men shall furnish that upper story of thine. With thine every sense alive to heaven's beauties and earth's deformities thou canst not glide down stream, as do others, singing to thyself sweet lullaby; in the yet future thy forceful nature shall help to dethrone the despot "custom," whose senseless denomination blocks the path of progress more hopelessly than do the snowy Alps. "Custom" *e.g.*, unreasoning self-love, makes our hoards of thought and of things so entirely our own, that we stand by error and retard truth, to the sacrifice of all which should be most precious. But be not daunted, little Zee; thou aimest at too much, little ant, thy one grain of corn is burden too heavy for thee still; do well thy work, and thou shalt hearten some weary one plodding life's thorny highway, thorniest always to those whom the gentle Shepherd takes into his special training.

CHAPTER II.

FREIGHTED.

ZEE was the second of a family of seventeen—four girls in as many successive years taking the lead in family honors. But Father Time has silvered the locks of some thirty odd years, since the old home rung with the shouts of the elder children. Blush of shame has never dyed the cheeks of sire or son of that forest of olive branches. Believing children to be heaven-sent blessings, the heads of the household were not careful to let their moderation therein be known of all men; so that the little chicks came trooping on the stage almost too fast to count them; and the mother's life, in consequence, was a slow martyrdom. But the father radiated an atmosphere of wondrous love and peace, as, giving glad welcome to each tiny floweret, he tossed it on his back with a lightheartedness which never owned a burden. How nobly did both parents do their part! what a dear old-fashioned couple they were! pity that such heroism should ever become antiquated.

As the dunce of the family, Zee is the black sheep amid a bevy of fair daughters. Out of the frying-pan into the fire, is her hot-water experience. Perhaps she lets the baby fall oftener than is wont; she has no girlish love of babies—they are no novelty. She is dubbed a "character" and accepts the distinctive appellation as a badge of disgrace; it may mean Turk, hobgoblin, or cannibal, for aught she knows. Friend she, as yet, has none, so mopes alone, the butt of her quick-witted sisters; or if permitted to join in their sports, a dreamy clumsiness, native

to her in her early youth, spoils the fun, or obtains the credit of so doing; hence, they leave her pretty much to her own will and zigzag perplexities, forgotten when she hides away in one of her densest copses, where all her happy hours are spent.

Too proud to court favor, she deems it a weakness to betray affection; hence, whatever of the lamb there is about her she chooses to conceal; and though lynx-eyed to the failings of others, she appears blind to her own. But oh, when there is no eye to pity, how she lashes herself with the rod she makes for her own back, in impotent resentment of that mysterious something which makes her unlike other people; the while she fails signally in attempting to be a copyist, hedged in, as she is, by strict conscientiousness coupled with felt incapacity!

Zee gladly put school-days, with their cuffing and snubbing, a long way behind her, although it was years ere she could shake herself free from the clutches of Miss Pout, who hung over her like the sword of Damocles. And to this hour, when speaking of her, Zee's eyes flash with unwonted fire, as she says: "When Miss Pout crosses my path, I long to tell her she has stood between me and the sun all my life, in failing to make the acquisition of knowledge possible to me. Oh! to think of her cold, hawk-like eye, ever ready to pounce down on this poor timid chick; of her long fingers that made my ears tingle; of her shrill voice, bearing word of doom to me; of her measured tread, which made me feel as if she were scrunching me body and soul beneath her feet, with all the enjoyment one has in scrunching a fine, large juicy apple. A sudden jump admonished me of her approach; a chill ran through me as her shadow fell upon me; and, like a startled deer, I longed to bound out of her sight, looking guilty, through fear doubtless. But, there, she has since become a wife and a mother; marriage may have humanised her."

But Zee did at length escape Miss Pout's tyranny, and if she stand not in the world's front ranks as a clever *woman, she* will prove up to the average,

even in this fast age. And if to play well is to work well, it augurs well for Zee, since she had become ringleader in all kinds of sports; so it is to be hoped that the mother will make something of her, for in the hive she calls home there is no room for drones. Indeed, she threw herself with all her might into whatever her hands found to do, and was fast becoming at home, spite of those long limbs of hers, which she had once wished to take off and hang up out of sight.

She used the needle deftly, and soon eclipsed her sisters in concocting doll-finery; even taught Sadai how to tie a bow in her bonnet-strings, and was commended by the father for so doing—sweet commendation to Zee, because rare. She displayed more skill, also, in the compounding of cakes, puddings, and tarts than did any of her sisters; her fingers were becoming useful, so it was to be hoped she would nurse the everlasting baby without breaking it more than a little. Indeed, she took to domestic affairs with right good will, resolving to "eclipse all the Betties in creation," and thus make something more than a stop-gap at home.

The multitudinous wants of nine girls and eight boys kept a sempstress constantly employed; hence, Zee's aptitude for the needle was no mean qualification in the estimation of the mother, who, assuming that Zee's feelings were as blunt as her brain, was conscious of no unkindness in speaking of her to strangers as "clever at her needle, though dull at her books." But, oh! how Zee hated that sort of make-weight! how painfully humiliated she felt in the presence of those who had been informed of her deficiencies, when in all probability she was lost sight of amid a crowd of petticoated romps!

So morbidly sensitive was she, indeed, as to her defects, both of body and mind, that when it was said of her, jokingly, "The ill-weed grows apace," the "ill-weed" joke left its sting, and scalding tears furrowed her cheeks; but as they offered no remedy, she carefully covered up her sore spot. The pert self-assertion characteristic of her, which led her into

many a pitched battle in defence of the weaker party, not always on the side of right, was wholly the result of bad training; she had never been told that self-assertion and self-seeking are essentially vulgar, and must be resolutely lived down until quiet dignity loyally ascends its rightful throne. Furthermore, whatever she advanced by way of opinion was met by a covert sneer, "Oh! you're a dunce!" which raised her ire, and was met by a quick retort that made her appear as unloving as unlovely; for never, even in thought, did she own to being a dunce. Though kicking against the prick of her own making, she would submit to no paring-down process; and to throw such children ruthlessly back on their "own wicked hearts" bars rather than unlocks their strong incorrigible natures. There ought to be room for such as Zee in this big world, but conventionalism possesses no elasticity.

Youth, of true metal, has a deal of wild blood to use up. Nature economises her resources; she is too chary of her pure grain to scatter it with spendthrift prodigality, when less costly tares, as evidence of good soil, will answer her purpose equally well. Whenever a child is found to be chafing under ill-judged restraint, he is certain to possess some force of character in his superabundance of energy.

The dominant will, "the thorn in the flesh," is, rightly disciplined, the surplus energy of the restive soul given of heaven to one of its favorites. Zee was capable of the utmost heroism, as are all girls; but there was no good angel to tell her that she had a *soul to form*, *i.e.*, to convert her faults into virtues, and that all mental flints and briars are discipline needful in the forming of it. Never in a book, such as is herein attempted, had she seen herself photographed with the simplicity and directness that at once gives prominence to the flaws of character and their remedy, or she would have become a very different woman. For among the more thoughtful, those who took the trouble to peep under the surface of the girl's better nature found sterling metal waiting on the miner's skill; she would rather have broken her

mental shins against huge boulders by the hill side than lounge idly in flowery meads.

Full of animal spirits, restrictions chafe her sorely; the spur works less harm than the curb. Open as the day, free as the air she breathes, gay as the sunshine dancing on the ever-changeful wave, she possesses too much force and vigor to be held in by the cords of precision and propriety; snap goes every leading-string the instant it is thrown around her. Exuberance of life is given to those whose course resembles the madly-rushing torrent hemmed in by coarse, stony mountains, rather than the pebbly prettiness of the well-sheltered valley.

Courage Zela, mountain-climber! each step brings the summit nearer; faint heart never yet breathed the bracing air of mountain-top. Let not difficulties frown thee down, nor envy thou the career of the tame and aimless, who will shirk life's noblest duties rather than ruffle their charming placidity, or risk the loss of their sweet-tempered insipidity. Not of such flimsy stuff are God's heroes made. Theirs is a lion-hearted love of truth, a mighty power of endurance, of entire self-abnegation; and in ruling well their own spirits, in order to stand against the stream of iniquity around them, they make grand acquisitions of moral courage. In the long-run, such beings have power with God and prevail with men. It were well to drop jewels in their path; they will have thorns and thistles enough.

Except when resenting personal injustice, or when stocks and stones unloosed her faltering tongue, Zee rarely ventured on more than monosyllables. She envied the girls from whose lips platitudes fell glibly, knowing nothing as yet of the power of thought, which would in its own good time find utterance. Gems are the better for friction; and the girl was now considerably brought out by a visit to London, by being thrown into the society of girls as superior to her early associates as the bumpkin was beneath them. An inward something spurred Zee on to a goal above *mediocrity; she* never placed herself on a footing *with other clods*; hence, in all the parties in which

she figured she stood resolutely shoulder to shoulder with the belle. Yes, she sunned herself in the light of the wittiest, that her own stupidity might stand out in bold relief, and, oh! what a senseless lump she felt herself to be!

Seeing her torn by conflicting emotions that she could not wholly conceal, a lady friend judiciously helped Zee to perceive that she was unjust to herself, inasmuch as the belle in question was an only child, the favorite alike of nature and of fortune. And while admitting that Zee might have neglected her opportunities of improvement, the lady insisted that dissatisfaction with present attainments in itself evidenced a capacity for improvement, pointing to the fact that some natures ripen by slow degrees because of the excellence of the fruit maturing. Happily Zee was not too dense to understand the drift of such an inspiring insinuation.

Returning to her home, a good genius of another form is found gravitating towards her, a "blue stocking;" such, at least, was the contemptuous term then applied to sensible women. Ruby, the lady in question, was one of three sisters who had been educated in France; and whether she had once been subjected to the dunce-ordeal and a fellow-feeling prompted her to court Zee's society is unknown, but they were soon close friends. Very patiently, Ruby, whose preference for Zee was regarded as "one of her crochets," bore with the queer girl, and tried to draw her out, to strike the key-note of an instrument apparently all unstrung, knowing that the moot question whether Zee had, or had not, her "right change" had never been fairly settled, and she so far succeeded in chasing away the diffidence that walled her in as to induce the timid child to express herself frankly, since she was in no danger of being snubbed.

What an oracle the naturally taciturn Ruby appeared to the ignorant Zee, as, in her attempt to win the latter to a loving appreciation of the useful and the good, she opened such of her stores of wisdom as came within the limits of the girl's comprehension! To her own circle, Ruby hinted

broadly that there was more in Zee than in any of her sisters, in that she had a mind, whereas they possessed only retentive memories and a great capacity for instruction, *i.e.*, cramming. Rank heresy, doubtless. But Ruby was as discriminating as thoughtful, and her carefully-formed opinions had in them an honest ring that commended them to the judgment; and she finally intimated to Zee's parents that she could discover no want in the girl, and if she was not the brightest star around their table, she was still well-freighted with common-sense. Sadai gladly gave Zee to understand that Ruby's good opinion of her was "quite a feather in her cap." Hence, to Ruby is due not only the dawn of happier days, but she left on Zee's spirits a lasting gladness, though they have never since met.

Thenceforward, Zee resolved to find her own way up the ladder of learning—*i.e.*, to learn from observation what she had failed to gain from books; she had always been quick to see the use of intelligible objects. The danger is that, instead of living out her true life, she will submit to the conventional paring down against which her own soul wisely revolted at that time.

Restless as impulsive, with an exaggerated truthfulness prompting her to lay bare every deviation from it in others, she was not likely to be a desirable companion to the commonalty, who were ever on thorns lest she should let light in on the dirty corners of their being. It is hard work to tear off plausibility's cloak; nevertheless, cobwebs on the brain need a spring-cleaning as much as does any haunted house.

It came to pass at length, that in reference to herself, despite her own gloomy forebodings and those of her friends, Zee, who was so fast budding into womanhood that at sixteen she was often told she "would never see twenty again," soon spread her canvas with the breeze, cropped the top of the morning for freshness, and capped all with the rose-glow of health, in which crown of blessing she ranked second to no one. In truth, she trod the earth with a jaunty, off-hand carelessness that suited her as well

as if her every nerve had been poised on wings. How or when metamorphosed no one could tell, but the thought of dunce faded out of all minds except, perhaps, those of her parents, in whose presence she was never quite at her ease, knowing that they feared she would "lose her head" in some of her daring flights. On the principle of a dunce—once a dunce always a dunce—haziness continued to float about their mental arithmetic, and prevented them reckoning her up rightly. Moreover, animal spirits were to some extent tabooed by the circle in which she moved; hence, there being no demand for the only ware she could offer on change, but a small share of self-glorification was open to her. She, nevertheless, held on in her happy-go-lucky way without any break-neck consequences.

Metaphorically speaking the two elder girls "came out" hand in hand; and Sadai became at once the full-blown cabbage rose—so brilliant in conversation, indeed (she had a wonderful memory), that one of her disputants, who gloried in his penetration declared: "Miss —— is born to be an old maid if ever a girl was." Adverse criticism, due to the fact, perchance, that in argument with her he invariably came off worsted, and the masculine mind resented the defeat. Sadai could afford to smile at his prediction, since a troop of beaux followed in her train; but with a perversity truly feminine, she cared most for the one (not the one alone) who cared least for her.

Zee had her dreams of love in a cottage, and was vain enough to believe she was worth loving even though not one of the male gender should make the discovery. Easy to be won she would not be, however unlikely to be sought. The few beings of either sex whom she deigned to honor with her esteem must bear the wear and tear of a life-long friendship, into which compact she never entered lightly, even with a girl. She knew a royal road to boy-favor, but declined the assumptions of hobbledehoyism, and as yet no eligible had risen on her horizon.

Having long since run past Sadai in height (Sadai's *active mind had stunted* her growth), Zee was spared

the, to most girls of marketable age, extreme mortification of wearing her elder sister's old clothes. In the matter of personal attractions, those, but few in number, who could see soul in Zee's face pronounced her "the flower of the flock." But when any such compliment was repeated to her, she laughed it away, saying: "They must be possessed of second sight or of some divining-rod, which transformed one at will," etc., declaring she could "see nothing but her nose when she looked in the glass—the dear old nose, which had been provocative of more fun than all the Grecians in creation." She good-humoredly accepted the, in her own estimation, fact that she was plain-looking, and made the best of it.

One Midsummer's night, Zee and a girl-friend had strolled together through a fine old park, in itself a wordless poem. A shower had newly laid the dust, and given to each tiny blade of grass its own drop of dew; indeed, Nature's many witcheries made the turf so springy, the girls could but dance over it, as to the right of them, to the left of them, in front of them, and behind them, the nightingale was betrayed, by the stillness of all things, into a gush of melody that hushed Zee's very being into forgetfulness as she listened with delighted awe.

Entering the parlor on her return home, she was introduced to a gentleman, whom we shall name Wrax; but unmindful of the stranger, the girl, whose frame quivered with the blissful intoxication of the hour, burst into a rapturous description of the old park, every inch of which was familiar to Wrax, being at the door of his childhood's home. So little had Wrax impressed Zee's mind (it was too full as of yore), that she had forgotten the eventful hour of meeting until he recalled it in after years.

Having for years merely visited her home at intervals, Zee was its only inmate to whom Wrax was a stranger; his visits thenceforth became so frequent, and his proffered excuses in reference thereto so far-fetched, that between the girls (there were two at least old enough to think of love and the like of it) there was

soon plenty of surmising as to which had made "a case of smite." Fruitless surmises, however, since Wrax was pointedly equal in his attentions to the sisters, frequently proposing a walk with both, carefully avoiding a walk with either alone; and if betrayed into a momentary toying with one, he turned with extra sweetness to the other instanter.

Wrax's advances were supported by good prospects and comely proportions; he was very tall, with a good head well-set on broad shoulders, together with the promise of all the whisker-and-moustache trimmings supposed to make a man look manly in the eyes of the fair sex. Then, too, he "had a nose," as Zee said. So that any girl who had unfortunately nothing but marriage to look forward to might have been forgiven the wish that he would turn his thoughts her way.

A married sister of Ruby's once said that our Adonis "struck her at first sight as the handsomest young fellow she had ever seen." But then she had seen him at his best, having met him at the door of Zee's home one fine winter's night, after a brisk walk had given bloom to his cheek and light to his eye. He was all animation, indeed, notwithstanding his deep-mourning habiliments; for well he knew there was to be a dance in the homely kitchen, and he loved the mazy whirl. Wrax, wild with excitement, was up to all sorts of hair-brained tricks. He, of course, led off in the first set of quadrilles with Sadai, choosing Zee, later in the evening, for "Sir Roger de Coverley," remarking aside to his partner, "No other couple in the room can make so high an arch as we can." And as they stood there, arms aloft, in all the joyousness of ruddy health, more than one whispered to another: "They're a fine couple!"

At length, his visits became so entirely a matter of course, the marvel was if he thought an excuse necessary; still, he was never off his guard, but so studiously polite and kind, that Zee fancied he purposed entrapping both sisters unawares, a mode of procedure which revolted her honest soul; she had no faith in the happy-with-either creed.

But it must be confessed Sadai early succumbed to

Wrax's fascinations; hence, to Sadai, "Which is the favorite?" became a question of vital import, for with all the ardor of nineteen summers, she indulged alternately in great expectations and wretched misgivings; whereas the freedom-loving Zee was not to be caught, to whom Sadai exclaimed, in all the desperation of "over-head-and-ears" helplessness: "Oh, Zee! I'd give anything to be as free and easy with Wrax as you are; but I am tongue-tied in his presence."

The father and mother, too, shared the ever-recurring doubt as to which was the loadstone; an attraction there must be, else why his frequent visits? Wrax was, indeed, "such a catch," respecting family, position, etc., that the girls' entire visiting circle presently asked, with growing interest: "Which is it to be? Is Zee's star in the ascendent?" No, it must be Sadai, notwithstanding that trifles light as air now and again pointed to Zee, sufficiently to make her sister draw love-lorn sighs when no one listened. She had, nevertheless, more than air to live upon; many a neatly turned compliment from Wrax fed the flame, if it were ever so little on the wane.

Many a friend, the parents included, unhesitatingly expressed the hope that Zee might prove to be the reigning queen, since Sadai had already ample conceit in reference to beaux. On a certain occasion, an old lady spent an evening in the bosom of the family, of whom Wrax, of course, made one, after whose departure mamma inquired of her friend: "Which do you think is the favorite?" To which, the old lady replied, sagaciously: "Well, I don't know; he talks to Sadai, but he looks at Zee." A nice distinction, proving the good dame to be well versed in love-passages.

A sprat supper was another eventful episode. Betty, having cleaned the fish, and spread them soldier-like, stiff and straight, on a dish, dredging each layer with flour, the girls were to cook them, for to make her daughters good cooks the mother spared neither time nor expense. Admonished of the danger of "too many cooks," Wrax yet opined there would be more fun with the girls in the kitchen than with the old folk in the parlor; and so, with a spring and a bound, made for

the familiar stove-territory, guaranteeing that by his aid the fish should be browned to perfection. To the full enjoyment of these nice little fish it is imperative that they be served hot and hot. And in cooking the first dish, Sadai was confused not a little by the quizzical Zee and his lordship himself, who watched the operations with inspiriting enthusiasm, making suggestions wide of the mark, to which Zee added piquancy, the pair cracking nuts and jokes, as the sprats frizzled in the pan.

The first dish was cooked, and served with the greatest nicety, of which dish Wrax, as a visitor, was in duty bound to partake. But no; left to his own sweet will, he elected to remain to watch Zee's wand of enchantment, since she threatened to excel Sadai. Heigh Ho, for Sadai! ill-starred Sadai! She could not dare to stay behind too; into the parlor she must go, followed by the dear little fish. Love-sauce is said to be mawkish rather than appetising, and it probably sufficed her cravings of hunger for the nonce.

Cooking that second dish of sprats must have been delirious work to the mischief-loving Zee. With so much spice in her composition, it must have demanded the resolution of a Hercules to resist the temptation to fizz up like champagne, and explode in a jocund fit of laughter. Did she conceal an inward chuckle? No doubt she did; not by so much as a smile would she help the solution of the vexed question. Wrax should find his own way, at his own pleasure, out of his self-made tangle. Suppressed merriment must, nevertheless, have tingled to her finger-ends, as she, with her elfish wiles, played on our hero's heart-strings, demurely turning the fish meanwhile. The very sprats put on their best behavior, as if they too enjoyed the sport.

Entering the parlor, followed by Wrax and Betty with the fish, Zee, by a quick appreciative glance, imposed silence on both parents, the merry twinkle in whose eyes told her plainly that the joke was not lost upon them. No sooner, however, was Wrax well off the *premises than the laugh* was all against the, for the

time being, much-to-be-pitied Sadai, who was already sufficiently in the dumps without her sister's banter. Given a cause of triumph, the young are often cruel. As far as Wrax was concerned, Zee was indifferent enough to be saucy, and the witch could tease a little; it was a family weakness, and at Sadai she must have her fling, with some spirit if not wit; and concluded her twitting by proposing another sprat-supper, at which Sadai, by waiving the priority of right in the cooking of the fish, should effectually nail the artful Wrax.

As younger sisters were fast trenching on womanhood, their elders gave place to them perforce, and electing to become a model "school-marm" by profession, Sadai voluntarily returned to the blissful quiet and unfading bowers of the Misses Smirke and Pout's seminary to qualify herself for her high vocation. Being thus summarily disposed of, the mother said, dryly: "If Sadai be his choice, Wrax's visits will now cease." And Zee gloried in his being put to the test, triumphing inwardly by anticipation. Novice though she was in affairs of the heart, she was as keen-scented as those who had been through the wood; but never a word did she say.

Sadai had vanished, but her spiritualised presence remained, or Zee said it did, and that it explained the impossibility of the devoted lover absenting himself; and by talking much of Sadai, all of which Zee faithfully chronicled to her, Wrax appeared resolved that "his particular weakness" should remain an open question.

The conventionalism that makes truth play lackey to expediency requires a girl to conceal her love if it exists; in Zee's case there was no love to discover, therefore none to conceal. She, skittish young thing, soliloquised thusly: "Eh! Mr. Wrax, you sly old fox! you'll bag your game without the waste of powder and shot, will you? But the very artlessness of somebody, who is neither to be bribed into love nor goaded into love by jealousy, may foil your deep-laid schemes. *You are but drifting* on to sand-banks, with the wind

dead in your teeth; veer round, old boy! make 'true as the needle to the pole' your motto, and come calm, come storm, you'll have a fair chance of bringing somebody to port. But now, good day, sir!"

Sadai having fled the home-nest, Zee must follow her example; and that she might see something of the world, it was arranged that she should go to Scotland, to a widowed aunt in easy circumstances. Wrax protested vehemently against Zee's being "exiled," as he called it, urging that he had seen a tear drop on her work during the discussion of the subject. Wrax may have flattered himself that the precious tear was his own by right divine; but no, it was wholly due to a cat-like love of home, coupled with an English girl's ignorant prejudices against the Scotch.

At length the time of trial came, the time of triumph too; for on the night of parting Wrax was woefully depressed. At the last moment, it fell to Zee's lot, as usual, to "let him out," when he became greatly agitated, seized her hand, kissed it reverently, put something into it, gasped out "Good-bye," and tore himself away, to hide perchance a tearfulness he tried in vain to choke down.

Love will out; it has many voices. Wrax had never made Sadai a present; and to crow over her clever sister, in being the first to have an acknowledged lover, was the uppermost feeling in the mind of the meddlesome, irrepressible Zee. She may have blessed her stars, and felt for Wrax a puzzled sort of gratitude at his having singled her out as the object of special favor; but she was conscious of no tender sentiment, no aching void within which he alone could fill. Fancy had not painted him her beau-ideal.

With an embarrassment quite novel, and feeling as sheepish, though from a different cause, as even Wrax could desire, Zee returned to the parlor, with that tale-telling present of his, which she wished at the bottom of the sea rather than that she should have to exhibit it. Yet she never dreamed of concealing it from her parents, who evidently expected Wrax to make some sign. *On looking* at his gift, behold a lady's pen-

knife! Unlucky choice! "Sure to cut their love in two," said the mother, presently adding, as she warmed under the discussion of the subject: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." A sorry prospect for one of the twain, according to the knife-cutting logic.

The father and mother rejoiced to find that Sadai had "not had it all her own way;" and assuming that Zee must love Wrax if he loved her, they complimented her on his being all that could be desired, with much more to the same purpose.

To have changed places with Zee, Sadai, who fancied her charms were irresistible to all save Wrax, would gladly have thrown her intellectual superiority overboard. But, bemoaning the crook in her lot, she must wear the willow for a season, writing herself down of all girls most miserable, and Zee blessed above women. Love's vapors blotted out her bit of blue sky, as briny tears deluged her pillow, or she sighed out her griefs on the bosom of some sweet girl confidant, as sorely tried may be as herself. Overwhelming as is such sorrow while it lasts, how petty it looks when life's well-fought battles fill the mind's foreground! It is well if the soul is stretched on the rack but once on its way to the valley of the shadow.

The following lines chimed only too well with Zee's spirit of perversity lang syne, and to her mind suggested the treatment Wrax's variable conduct merited. Where a life-long happiness or misery is at stake, a girl, instead of taking her lover's professions of attachment on trust, should test his sincerity by all reasonable methods, and counterfeit men richly deserve the treatment the lines prescribe; but to subject a really generous, unselfish man to such waywardness is an almost unpardonable crime.

Now out upon this smiling, no smile shall meet his sight;
But a word of gay reviling is all he'll hear to-night,
For he'll hold my smiles too lightly if he always see me smile,
He'll think they shine more brightly when I have frowned awhile.

'Tis not kindness keeps a lover, he must feel the chain he wears,
All the sweet enchantment's over when he has no anxious cares;

For the heart would seem too common if he knew that heart his own,
Ah! the empire of a woman is still in the unknown.

Let change without a reason make him never feel secure,
For 'tis an April season that a lover must endure;
They're all of them so faithless, their torment is your gain;
Would you keep your own heart scatheless, be the one to give the pain.

To give pain to kill self-love and selfishness, is sometimes imperatively necessary, but take care that you *wound to heal*, to develop true manliness; such wounding, to be effective, must first have cut deep within one's own spirit. Love execrates the mere animalism, which teaches that the gratification of the passions is happiness; love cannot exalt itself by the abasement of another. Impossible! A nobler, more interested love—the love which can reverence only the God-like in the beloved—must be cultivated before passion's supremacy shall be displaced.

Appreciating the highest in themselves, girls should aim at naturalness at all costs. Nature, even in its "fall," is better than art, because more God-like, and the grace which is born of inward beauty of character is divine. And yet it is to be feared that "society," so-called, is daily becoming more artificial. Art-imitators are usually of the feminine gender, distinguished by an imposing self-consciousness—an I-am-holier-than-thou imperiousness, which aims at putting others down, much as a cat sets paw upon a mouse. Art-manufactured women stand much on the parade of hollow dignity; every movement of the body, together with the expression of the face, is trained with consummate art; every emotion, every impulse even, are reduced to measure, until they can almost be produced on the point of a lancet: and, in consequence, the outer tabernacle becomes as statuesque as though cut in marble. There is wisdom, of a sort, in such training, since if the muscles of the face have too much play, the face ages before its time; on the other hand, the lungs need exercise, and a voice, soft and low, is cultivated at the expense of the lungs. Extremes are dangerous; and art may be studied till it degenerates

into the cream of the cream of artfulness, contrasting unfavorably with that perfect truthfulness conventionalism finds it impossible to deal with.

If art-imitators be sincere, if their souls are as transparent as their seeming, goodness will supply a silver thread of consistency, whereon the pearls of character may hang together in unmistakable harmony. But if a scratch-cat nature lurks beneath the fair exterior, how treacherous the whole appears! Girls, don't ape anything; to ape is seemly only for monkeys. Have done with cant of thought, of word, of look, and of deed. Go wade, if need be, through waters dark and deep, subject to every trial to which woman is heir, and if after some twenty, thirty years of close companionship, insincerity be the last sin those who know you best are likely lay to your charge, you are a something immeasurably better than actors. Art may be bought at too high a price. Character alone is wealth, beauty, goodness. Make the soul beautiful, it will enrich and beautify the life.

CHAPTER III.

PURSUED.

A QUICK, pleasant sail landed Zee in Edinburgh's fair city, and she was welcomed by friends who received her with the deference due to a woman, and thus removed, in a measure, the diffidence natural to her in her intercourse with strangers. The new world, too, necessarily opened the eyes of her mind, receptive as it was of impressions. With Scotch lassies she was directly at one, and quite too ready to join in their trifling and small talk; but at the bachelor order of Scotia's sons she looked askance: they were older, and of a different stamp from her beaux of yore, limited, as they were, to a select few.

To a womanly-looking girl, slightly elevated in the social scale, Wrax's youth was one of the disadvantages under which he labored. To him out of sight was not out of mind as concerned Zee, for she quickly received a letter from him, with a glumness which boded no good to the writer, whose preference flattered her vanity, but never so much as ruffled the surface of deeper feeling. Wrax's habitual wariness had deserted him at the wrong moment, or he never would have written that "Mamma had no doubt that Zee would be glad to hear from him." Writing that sentence sealed his doom. Zee was such a touch-me-not in the matter of the affections, that she would have recoiled from one for whom she had a liking, could he have presumed upon it; and Wrax, having long since won the mother over to his side by showering upon her attentions which he deemed it unwise to pay to either daughter, Zee feared, not without reason, that in her desire to secure the prize the mother had assured Wrax that he was safe on the score of her daughter's

affections. Zee must be something more than grateful for the honor put upon her, reasoned the old folks. Not so Zee, odd fish that she was; the possibility of Wrax having made sure of her love would have quenched the spark had there been one kindled. Yet was she no flirt; liberty she loved, license pleased her not.

Receiving letters from Wrax, and answering the same, soon became exceedingly distasteful to Zee. Still she shrank from wounding his vanity sufficiently to enlighten him as to the unwelcome fact. Here Sadai came to the rescue, telling him the state of affairs in tones no doubt tender as true. Letters legitimately dolorous, for and against a further correspondence, at length, to Zee's relief, closed all communication between herself and Wrax. What a blow to the scheming lover, who believed he had the bird in his hand! But however piqued his vanity might be, Zee believed he would soon solace himself with another.

Having experienced the pangs of unrequited love, Sadai could offer the rejected heartfelt sympathy. What could be more natural than that she should fill the niche left vacant by Zee, who would have esteemed the fates most propitious had they made the pair affinities for aye. But, alas, they were playing at cross-purposes—fire-eaters, both of them, with nought but themselves to consume. Wrax battled with his despair alone. Love's cross-current ran none the smoother for Sadai, in whose lacerated bosom hope's last ray died.

To her parents, who esteemed Wrax a king among men, Zee's rejection of him had given great offence; and in writing to her they never once, during her twelve months' absence, failed to "pity her blindness," or grieve that she "stood in her own light." Wrax himself (there was good stuff in Wrax) kept the wound open. He had never forsaken the old home, never forsaken the old love; nor did he attempt to conceal the joy Zee's anticipated return home afforded him. She, on the contrary, being averse to a renewal of the severed friendship, and knowing that her return home was urged in the belief that she "could not fail to love Wrax on better acquaintance," preferred remaining at

a distance, and forthwith advertised for a situation as useful companion to a lady, mentioning her English birth and desire to travel.

But no situation being offered to Zee's liking, home she must go, nothing loth except for Wrax; and knowing he desired to meet her in London, she purposely made her return from the North uncertain. Hence, when she did at last land in that ocean of bewilderment, the modern Babylon, with its sea of absorbed stone-wall faces, a sickening sense of insignificance crept over her, such as youth in its travels must ever feel (did, at least, in those days); and owing to an inculcated distrust of strangers, lavish attentions from them would but have aggravated her sense of loneliness. Grateful for such companionship as her luggage afforded, she, without much ado, gathered her silent friends around her, hailed a cab, and bidding adieu to the motley throng, stepped gladly off the public stage into a cosy English home once more.

Apprising the home-birds of her safe arrival, Zee was careful to leave her return to rusticity an open question, to escape that dreadful Wrax. The crest pertaining to her family name is a lion rampant. The fickle month of March presided at her nativity; hence, "mad as a March hare" may explain Zee's manifold peculiarities. She had proved as invulnerable to the wiles of the canny Scot as to those of the Englishman. Zee might, perchance, have loved, but her "object" was so singularly obtuse, that Cupid's scratch in her case healed in a day or two; she kept the reins of heart and mind too well in hand to canter down love's steep incline, there to perish in a sea of neglect. Zee and the willow parted company ere she was once under its baneful shade, and leaving Auld Reekie scot free was so much in favor of the absent lover.

Hungering for news of the March hare, Wrax lingered wistfully about the charmed home-circle, and hearing from the fountain-head that he might hope to see his idol in a few days at most, the railway-station thenceforward became his post of observation. *From many a train* he turned away heart-sick, but his

attendance failed not, until the "object of all in creation most dear" alighted from one of the carriages, when he stepped aside perforce to hide a sudden tremulousness; and as for Zee, she dared look neither to the right nor left, lest a stray glance should rest on him.

At home once more, loving greeting fell on her ear; but she had barely time to give a kiss all round and lay aside her wraps before she was "wanted downstairs." Downstairs she went, to meet whom do you guess? Why, Wrax, of course. Yes, all alone in the little parlor the pair met face to face, and Zee was not simpleton enough to run away. Wrax was not given to rhapsodising, and may not have put his welcome home in so many words; there was, nevertheless, a world of content in his manner. Tacitly ignoring the past, they talked long and learnedly, no doubt; for Zee, having gained by the varied experience travel affords, was every inch a woman, possessing a quiet confidence equal to any emergency; nor would Wrax, although less travel-stained, have owned to lacking the eighth of an inch of manhood. He had, indeed, acquired a suavity of voice and manner, seeming to defy dispute; yet Zee did presume to differ from him in much that he advanced. And he told her at a later date that at that first interview he had thought her "greatly changed"—not for the better, she opined.

The fact was, the girl had leaped into the woman, and he had not been there to allow the always critical transformation to take place imperceptibly. And more than this, Zee had changed grievously; she had become conventional—traitor to the higher, truer life in seeking the good-will of her fellows, rather than their good, as will presently appear.

Much of the trepidation she felt in again meeting with Wrax arose from the fear that he had worshipped an ideal Zee, and that the veritable flesh and blood would dispel the illusion. What if her cherished experiences, in rubbing off the blush-rose of simple innocence, had substituted the gaudy poppy? What if his idol proved to be of brass, his rare gem a worth-

less bauble; and he, in flinging her from him, with a Spartan-like heroism for which she had not given him credit, should cast his own fetters around herself, and leave her to fade away, a love-lorn maiden, while he stood a little beyond, upright, gazing with gratified scorn on the fatal trammels in which he consigned her to the blest shades of forgetfulness, whence he had himself but now emerged? Zee was exceedingly sensitive on this point, and it was excusable, remembering the mother's knife-cutting superstition, which was to leave one of the twain out in the cold.

Notwithstanding certain nervous twitchings as to whether she is fire-proof, she will doubtless hold her own against Wrax's graces of person and position, unless he love her still, and seek her in right earnest, in which case it is devoutly to be hoped that she will inhale that spiritual ether, which neither comes nor goes at our bidding.

Congratulating himself on the coast being clear, Wrax resolved to go in and win, or at least to keep other suitors at bay until his case proved hopeless. And having the run of the house, he unceremoniously popped in upon Zee at early morn and dewy eve, hoping to find her as neat in her household duties, as with book or needle in the parlor. By the way, does the god consult the happiness of himself or of his goddess, when he goes prying into her scrubbing, cooking and sewing qualifications? What if she were to return the compliment, and starting on a voyage of discovery on her own account, overhauled his private affairs to satisfy herself that he was the Simon Pure he represented himself to be? Is the prying less necessary in the one case than in the other? Once let the goddess become a thoughtful woman, and she will take certain of the prying gender down from their high horse.

The change in Zee, real or fancied, which Wrax saw, failed to deter him from remaining her devoted knight in season and out of season; at her best and at her worst, she was his one particular star, and she honored his unwavering constancy, not a little gratified to find *herself at a premium* still. Being no longer desirous

of concealing his devotion to his morning and evening star, he ceased to require a discreet third person to join them in their rambles. At home and abroad, at all times and places, without any ostensible reason, Wrax cropped up, observing which curious coincidence, the little daughter of a lady, visiting at Zee's home, inquired of her mamma, in all the innocence of her short life: "Mamma, why does that young man follow us about everywhere?" She, happy child, never lived to understand magnetism.

All too soon, as the months wore on, Zee allowed herself to drift into an engagement with Wrax. How could she help it, indeed? how was she to throw away so tried and steady a regard? If love is assumed when an engagement is entered upon, Zee, to please the friends who had grieved over her previous "error of judgment," no less than to please Wrax himself, had said "Yes" when she ought to have said "No," but lacked the moral courage so to do. Gladly would she have schooled her heart to fondness, and have given him of her best; but she did not know how to set about it, as, indeed, how should she? It is not given us to love when and whom we will; the combustion must be spontaneous; love, like womankind, refuses to be drilled. The best, the most receptive of both sexes, often suffer most from the fitful Cupid, who laughs at his empty quiver and random shots.

Wrax's faith in Zee's pledged word was such that he was content with ever so slight a hope of winning her love, nor feared the frustration of his wildest anticipations. But since flirting no longer whetted the edge of their intercourse, there was in his attentions too much of the dumb-show of the faithful doggie to be agreeable. His earlier hair-breath escape had so deadened his courage, that the Dick-Turpin sort of lover, which would have suited our spirited Black Bess, was not forthcoming. Zee is now the one to want a third party in their perumbulations; not that she is more nice than wise, but that she may have the diversion of watching another skipping about collecting the treasures the hedgerows supplied, and she often coaxed Merlee to accompany them. On

the road out, gathering mosses and wild flowers afforded delightful amusement; but in the deepening twilight such resources failing her, Merlee pronounced "lover's pace, three miles in four hours," wearisome to a degree, and left the pair to edify each other in silence.

Walking, demurely, by Wrax's side, with her hand locked on his arm, and receiving merely "Yes" or "No," with any number of "looks of love," as Sadai would have said, in response to her sallies of wit and wisdom, this was little less than purgatory to the quick-silver girl, who was like tow, that any spark but Wrax's could set on fire. No wonder she used the nettle occasionally, and longed to hop off and leave him in the lurch, for he must have been inexcusably slow to have remained dumb with such a merry sprite by his side. The scenery amid which they roamed ought to have made star-gazing delightful work even to the most sluggish clodpole. But though a rustic like Zee, Wrax's tastes were not pastoral; he hadn't a soul above bricks and mortar; he craved "life," the "life" found in the bustling, fever-breeding city. For an object in nature to claim even a passing notice from him was a nine days' wonder; Zee kept a queerly-twisted bit of thorn for years, because he had given it to her and called it "curious."

The time has arrived for Sadai and Iva to start a young ladies' boarding-school in their native town, Zee being appointed commissioner-in-chief of the sewing-basket, etc. So youthful a firm was it (its head being but one-and-twenty) that a matronly servant became at once an institution; and grave deliberation was held as to whether a "follower," in the person of Wrax, could be permitted to desecrate the virtuous domicile. The father said, laughingly, to Wrax: "I can't think how you find the courage to go courting among such girls. I never could have done it." Nor was the father the only man who thought the elder girls (Merlee was head man to the old folk) a formidable trio to attack, the furies where the graces should be, perhaps. But Sadai and Iva protested that Wrax, *having the worst* on his side, there was nothing for

anyone to fear; whereas Wrax may have questioned whether "the worst" in her pranks was as much on his side as were her accommodating sisters. But no; Zee's heart was tender, if her treatment was mettlesome; he thought himself more to be envied than pitied; her teasing was so pleasing, there could not be too much of it.

During school vacation a full-fledged Cockney fell from the clouds into this charming dovecote, or rather, on discovering what its inmates were, he made something more than a half-way house of the old home, constituting himself knight-errant to the girls. Being a bachelor and related to Ruby by marriage, he at once found grace with Zee, who named him "My man Friday." Well as he might know his great Babylon, he was as green as to what life in the woods might mean as any country cousin could desire, and his verdancy served Zee to perfection. He loved a lark, so did she; but "She must keep the ball rolling," he said (and she was willing to take him at his word), "if he were to find a charm in the dreary wilds of fell and flood." Oh, fie! he all but annihilated himself at starting, by hinting that the country could be "dreary." Zee told him that "to become a spick and span Hodge he must be dying with love for hedges and ditches, thrushes and witches, while sighing for a lodge in some vast wilderness," which he devoutly "hoped he might never possess, unless someone," who shall be nameless, "consented to be the patron saint of his hermitage." He thenceforth caught her cue (some men are pure clay in some hands), only stipulating that she should give him her company without stint, and he would yield himself unreservedly to her tuition of rustic mysteries.

Oh, delightful! Zee had at last found someone after her own heart, ravelling out and rippling over with a jollity which spurned all bounds and set priggishness at defiance; and with mischief throbbing in her every nerve, she clapped her hands in exuberant gladness; and, oh, on how many a wild-goose chase she sent her *faithful* swain, deigning only to laugh at him for his *pains. Friday*, nevertheless, professed to meet her

admiration for nature, animate and inanimate, with like enthusiasm. Zee lived in clover for the nonce; and in all boating, nutting, and lily-gathering parties he was the doughty knight, and she the dainty maiden surrounded by a fairy circlet of far-reaching spells, all the powers of the air assisting at her conjuring.

Just now a nutting expedition is in the wind, and merry voices chant their names; they heed not; good-natured, half-baked simpletons may gather nuts and throw them to Zee to crack, or leave her free to while away the time of her smoke-dried city guest with resplendent visions which wrap them in delirious day-dreams as they revel in the sweet woodland scenes and scents. But when once she lays aside her mystic wand, she is her own slap-dash self again, scrambling after nuts with an energy which kept Friday, who was step-and-fetch-it according to order, on thorns, so completely, indeed, did sundry significant nods from Zee unhinge his nerves, that he was never so supremely happy as when she was in dreamland. And seated on a throne of his improvising, himself in all humility at her feet, she indulged his humor by building marble halls in the air, and all her spidery webs are herring-boned with golden thread. Now she glides along avenues stretching further than eye can scan, to the mansion of many turrets deeply embowered in shrubberies. There are the broad gravel walks, mossy terraces, close-shaven lawns with choice floral glories; a fountain, too, and fish, silver and gold; a lake, also, in the distance, with swans sailing on its bosom—beauties grouped in rich profusion to captivate the senses, making of this and that enchanted castle a fit habitation for the gods of earth. The fair creatures seen sauntering down the sloping lawn in sweeping trains of stiff brocade are Mistress Sadai, Mistress Iva, and Mistress Merlee, accompanied by all the adjuncts which serve to adorn quality ladies—a screeching peacock, pet poodles, and a monkey in a silken vest—the latter pet is no fiction, Jacko and Zee are bosom friends. If the scene and the damsels are too stately, Zee, shedding over them her rollicking humor, quickly changes *them into blithe, sprightly* belles, to each of whom she

apportions a serving-woman, a splendid equipage with outriders, and caps all with lordly suitors and subsequent jubilations.

Professing great love for water parties in tiny pleasure boats manned by inexperienced rowers, Friday, the cheat, is doomed to figure at one such party. What is more delightful, when the nerves are in tune, than sailing, as our friends did, on a narrow meandering river, screened from the sun's fierce rays by a steep bank over which the tangling vines, woodbine and convolvulus, spread their all-encircling arms, while a wide expanse of richly wooded hill and dale lies peacefully before them? Here and there the margin of the river is dyed blue by the bright-eyed forget-me-not, some of which flowers the gallant Friday must present to Zee; and, lest he should be supplanted, the Cockney, in his insane haste to reach them, set one foot on land, thereby sending the cockleshell of a boat a foot or two farther from the water's edge than was agreeable. And there was Friday, with one foot on land and one on sea, somewhere, anywhere between heaven and earth but where he wished to be! A stalwart arm, however, pushed the boat in, so that our exquisite saved his skin and his courage by jumping to land.

In those, to Friday, truly awful moments, when he had the rare felicity of seeing his manly form mirrored in the pellucid waters expecting to explore the realms of the finny tribes perforce, the saucy Zee did not even smile; but the instant he was safe her laugh rang out loud and clear. And talking loudly of payment aside, Friday—would you believe it?—in all the primitive ignorance of his Cockney education, positively accredited Zee with having all but slipped the boat from beneath him. No. He trusted to the treacherous waves instead of the faithful Zela, who said it was almost to be regretted that he had not fallen into the water in the act of clutching the flowers and taken them, poetically, down with him to kiss the slimy bed of the river, then to have thrown them to her as he rose to the surface with "Forget-me-not" on *his despairing* lips, when she would have earned *the Humane* Society's medal by frantic efforts to

save him by means of her cambric pocket-handkerchief.

Aye! what a dance she led the dear fellow! yet never was there a more harmless pair of goody-two-shoes. Friday did sometimes lose his senses, raving about "bright eyes," etc., when Zee would add, with an archness that made him bound off to a safe distance, "aquiline nose, damask cheek, ruby lips, pearly teeth, dimpled chin, swanlike neck," so on and so forth. Still, never did Friday whisper tender word, nor by any kind of casuistry attempt to spell "opportunity." Whether or not he knew of her engagement, she did, and that sufficed. Wrax must have been absent on leave surely, as never so much as his shadow was seen; and even admitting that Zee went to the end of her tether, she did not play football with Friday's heart, nor did he play with hers.

The father being rather much of a prude, anything ever so little askew looked ugly to him; and hearing of Zee's "flirtation," he quickly brought her to book. Girls and boys had a wholesome dread of being closeted with the duty-loving, duty-doing father, whose verdict of "guilty" was equivalent to being sent to Coventry till self-reproach died a natural death. Now Zee's turn had come, and the father wound up his lecture by saying that "Mr. —— was not worthy to wipe the dust from Wrax's feet." The highest commendation he could offer.

Zee questioned not his verdict. She liked Mercury well in its way, but Friday, who was so much laughing-gas, never could have touched the deeply-earnest side of her nature; he was, nevertheless, a host in himself, whereas Wrax was miserably prosaic. Still, in a fair contest, the latter would have carried off the prize, since if there was more stolidity in Wrax there was, Zee thought, also more solidity, and she esteemed gravity above levity. Wrax, too, inquired what such "goings on" meant, but was silenced by a word from Zee.

In truth, the existing social relations between the sexes are as monstrous as if their interests were *antagonistic, not identical*—their purposes impure,

not pure. When there is no passion to confess nor to conceal, much pleasant and profitable intercourse between the sexes is possible, but ungoverned passion is a betrayer. The one unanswerable argument against the prevailing animalism is for women to be bright, clever and incorruptibly good. But so long as the generality of women are what they are, men are likely to treat them as toys, if nothing worse. To gauge their worth, take away their love of ease, of dress, of cant and scandal, and what remains—what soul is there ?

CHAPTER IV.

UNSOPHISTICATED.

AREN'T you impatient to hear that Zee has caught some faint echo of the music of the spheres? Fancy a girl possessing twenty years as wedding portion unlettered in affairs of the heart! In setting up her standard of excellence, she must have flown over the heads of the entire bachelor order; and yet she was capable of complete abandonment where the affections were concerned, but withal so given to look before she leaped, that she could not "fall in love," as the stupid phrase is, with her eyes shut, nor be beguiled into taking thorns for roses, nor gall for honey. Mental blind-man's buff had no charms for her, and yet had she used her brains as well as she used her eyes she would have had no history.

There never was a moment that Wrax was not free to take himself off and plight his troth to some more gifted, more enchanting fair one. With every-day girls he was the prince of song and story, and they were ready to champion him to the world's end and a little beyond it; deeming him most unlucky in his choice, they queried what he could see in that odd girl to bind him her willing slave. It is certain, however, that she had hooked her fish securely enough to draw in and pay out her line in a way exceeding tantalising to the ill-fated gudgeon. And it is equally certain that Wrax was one of those undisciplined yet essentially masculine beings who must pursue, even though it be a will-o-the-wisp. Hence, if Zee had loved him with all the bent of ungoverned inclination, caprice would have been her safest weapon of attack, that the retiring modesty and delicate shrinking of

supposed doubtful affection might have lent piquancy to the pursuit.

A dear old aunt, who is sitting on some one's footstool in the New Jerusalem, used to shake her curls at Zee, and try to read her a lesson ; but she invariably cajoled the antiquated belle, whose beaux had slipped through her fingers, into such a betrayal of her own weaknesses that the auntie was fairly ruled out of court as censor. If but once started on her theme of themes, the doting old lady expatiated, with fervid eloquence, on the ecstacy of the "first kiss of love," declaring there was no other sensation like unto it, and that it could be experienced but once in a life-time. The auntie took that "first kiss" with her to the skies—all that remained of it, at any rate. Zee protested, irreverently, that "kisses had been given to her in such round dozens that she knew no difference between the first and the last, so that the superlatively sweet kiss was yet in store for her. That, in fact, she preferred motto kisses to the essence of two lips, the former being good to eat, but the latter good for nothing."

Merlee, having early bewitched a cousin of Wrax, their affinities led the cousins, quite naturally, to the door of the fateful dwelling ; but once over its threshold their lines diverged. The cousin's mystic course was so calmly serene, that he could afford to joke at Wrax's expense, and entertained the girls, at subsequent trysts, with his (Wrax's) wild vagaries, when led agate by a frown of the vixenish Zee, whose spirit unwittingly kept the woe-begone lover hovering on the confines of her, to him, boundless realm.

The March lion and lamb, at whose dictation Zee came into the world dancing a reel, were each by turns rampant in her ; and clearly she would not have suited Wrax had she been one of the flat and stale sort. It may be that in those moments of intense absorption—in which, according to the cousin's account, Wrax was wont to indulge—his better nature triumphed, and he communed with himself much as follows : "Aye, Zee, *I cannot* tell what thou art to me. I never had faith *in a living* soul until I knew thee. Oh, would that I

were more worthy of thee! Thou inspirest me with the noblest ambition of which I am capable; but I am weaker than thou knowest, and my better self prompts me to acknowledge my sins. But, oh, I dare not risk the confession. If thou shouldst scorn me I am lost: to part thee and me would be to wrench my being asunder. When once thou art the presiding genius of my hearth, thou shalt be to me wisdom and strength. If thou couldst but give me thine unquestioning love, how full of content life would be! that thou canst not is more my fault than thine. Woe is me! Guilt often skirts despair. Alas, my Zela!"

True, most true, foolish Wrax! thy guilty secret stains thee more than thou knowest, going deeper and deeper into thy nature the longer thou concealest it. Be a man! Trust Zee; she will neither betray nor desert thee. Her tender susceptibilities are ever sending out feelers for solid rock in thy character, to which she fain would cling tenaciously; but an empty void in thyself throws her back stranded when she longs to trust.

Like all girls similarly circumstanced, Zee had to pass the crucial test of an introduction to the family of her lover, whose sisters, educated by the Misses Smirke and Pout, had laid aside school drudgery when Zee commenced it. But distance, together with religious (nay, sectarian) differences—that fruitful bone of contention—separated the two families. Hence against Wrax's family Zee's ignorant prejudices were to some extent in arms. Nevertheless, as their intimacy ripened, its every member won her respect and confidence, as signally as Wrax had failed to do. And notwithstanding his apparent frankness towards herself respecting his own affairs, to his own immediate relatives, however reasonable were their inquiries in reference thereto, he equivocated with an unblushing effrontery which disgusted Zee, whose remonstrances on the subject were met with: "You don't know my family; I had better give the town-crier a shilling to publish my affairs than take them into my confidence."

Zee was silenced, not satisfied, thinking: "If he deceives *his own friends* he may deceive me," feeling

confident, likewise, that in speaking thus slightingly of his family he was guilty of the grossest injustice towards them. Zee's father had taken his children, at an early age, into his confidence, and they made his joys and sorrows their own, nor ever abused his trust. *Close* would have applied to Zee, if to any one of his children; yet, try how she would, she failed utterly to excuse Wrax's unjustifiable secrecy. Indeed, his endless scene-shifting and prevarication, in reference to his own affairs, caused Zee at times to recoil from him with a loathing which made their engagement a stupid farce, likely to result in little happiness to either party. Besides which, a serious charge was preferred against him in his business transactions—which, however, fell through, reflecting more damagingly on the man who made it than on Wrax himself, on whose part there had been more or less of indiscretion, but nothing remotely criminal. Pending the investigation of the matter, Zee, who was only too ready to write Wrax down guilty, peremptorily closed all communication between them, but on finding she had wronged him, penitently healed the breach. She not unfrequently made such blunders; yet on the whole her judgment was sound, though apt to be arrogant because she stood alone.

It would, nevertheless, be wrong to convey the impression that Zee perpetually snubbed Wrax. His society was acceptable when she succeeded in quieting inward misgivings as to whether he was or was not all that he ought to be. Despite his taciturnity, there was intellect equal to her need, but there was no repose in his character. He never appeared sufficient in himself for his own needs. Then his words, too, sometimes had a hollow ring in them that evinced the *want* in his character of which Zee was so painfully conscious, though unable to define.

In order to appreciate what follows, the reader must have sickened of all cold-blooded mortals, useless alike to God and man, who, affecting to despise "the grovelling cares of earth" and the beautiful robe yclept human nature, arrogate to themselves a saintliness which, if their pet shibboleth be refused, shows a face and a heart like a flint even to the excellent of the

earth. And in justice to Wrax, to show the disadvantages under which he labored, it must be confessed that, in defiance of her better judgment, Zee had permitted herself to be talked into adopting the above order of saintliness.

The debased selfishness she presumed to call "religion"—a kind of top-dressing, to be put on and off at will, a something outside and apart from herself—blurred instead of beautifying her life, by instilling a contempt almost amounting to hatred towards "unbelievers." And becoming, by "making a profession of religion," a worse, not a better, woman—a Pharisee, exclusive and repelling—she lost much of the ingenuousness native to her, and substituted a conventional pretentiousness which taught her to shun, as she would shun the devil, all who were professedly less favored of heaven than herself, lest she should fly in the face of Providence and imperil her "precious, never-dying soul."

How far this black heathenism, which she called "religion," tinged her distrust of Wrax and raised a barrier between them, it is impossible to say. But in so far as Wrax refused to subscribe to her sectarianism he was better than she, and had he been a truer man, would have given Zee and her pietism—a mere cloak as it was, not her very self, as it ought to have been—the cold shoulder.

Zee's father was a Bethel-pillar, as was also a neighbor of his, a man Savage by name and by nature, and his God, thanks to his creed, was more savage than he. Such a father would have made a devil incarnate of Zee, probably. He had too much iron in his constitution—too much faith in the ramrod; whereas Zee's father, though rather straight-laced, was naturally a better man than any creed as then propounded could have made him. He had no creed; his religion was therefore vital, making his life, like the child's sky, "full of gimlet-holes, to let the glory through." His words and deeds, based on the most chivalrous tenderness, were governed by strict rectitude down to the smallest act.

What mere animals were some of the Bethel parsons

of other days whom Zee's father entertained! Parsons were parsons once upon a time, and fared sumptuously, one of them being an abomination to the quizzical girl. How that fellow made the viands fly! and his potations were equally liberal. Zee declared he must have a second stomach, like "Jack the Giant Killer." Elijah's ravens never could have satisfied him, unless kind heaven had taken away his appetite. And yet, with characteristic flippancy, he called himself a "pensioner on heaven's bounty for a morsel of bread and a cup of cold water."

And there are children still to whom "religion," so called, takes as grossly sensual forms as those of the Bethel parson and Bethel pilgrim of the Savage order, whose evil influences are never counteracted by the Christian's beautiful life. And for such children's sake, who are drifting no one knows whither, it were well to declare that our religion is what we are—true if we are true, false if we are false—since, if loved and lived, Christianity proper never fails to make men as gentle and tolerant as was its founder. To be thus relentlessly nailed to our colors will be fatal to all pretentiousness.

Even among the Savage order of men, despite their glaring inconsistencies, there is to the reflective mind a depth of misdirected conscientiousness which only needs to be turned to good account to make their characters as admirable as they are now too often execrable; and to good account it will be turned when once men understand that they have souls to *form*, in contradistinction to the popular notion of souls to *save*. The formed soul is the saved soul—formed through great inward tribulation—as will be carefully elaborated as the story proceeds.

However, despite the crape and bombazine in which the popular orthodoxy more or less enshrouded Zee's spirit, it is certain that with all her faults, and they were manifold, Wrax loved her for what she was in herself. Her very blemishes were the offshoots of a too richly abounding life. There was in her all the conceit which usually accompanies ignorance and good natural ability, ability her very stupidity evoked, against which

stupidity her whole life was a conscious protest. Her self-love, too, was as pronounced as was that of her neighbors, and as bitterly as they she resented the wounding of it. But her truthfulness was acknowledged perforce. She was, indeed, made of such transparent stuff that deliberate, persistent wrong-doing was impossible to her, and her wide-awake habit of looking straight into one made common-place mortals wince to the depth of their deep self-complacency, and such soon shun the disturber of their peace. Hence a sympathising friend she found not, though she gave good entertainment.

So far, in truth, had she herself fallen short of her own standard of true living that she despised herself more than others were likely to despise her; and if some far-seeing spiritualist had invaded the girl's cobwebbed domain called heart or brain he would have discovered that her fear of fears was, not whether Wrax was good enough for her, but whether she was the right woman for him—whether someone else might not make him happier than she could ever do. And, dwelling reproachfully on her want of faith in herself no less than in him, Wrax endeavored to reason away her fears as quickly as they presented themselves; and Zee, forgetting herself after such remorseful seasons, tried the harder to believe in Wrax through and through. There was nothing, save his excessive secrecy and his injustice to his family, tangibly wrong in him to warrant Zee's dishonoring suspicions. He was correct and plausible to a fault, and she tried to persuade herself her suspicions were largely due to her inherent whip-and-scorpion-making nature. And yet what could it be, that vague undefined *want* in him which, phantom-like, filled her with apprehension even while it eluded her pursuit? She had laid many a ghost, but this one, when she least expected it, arose and dogged her footsteps.

Then, too, she silently grieved over the fact that those whom she believed to be better and wiser than herself, because everyone liked them, cheerfully ignored in Wrax the want of the "one thing needful" so *necessary to herself,* personal regard and his good

prospects appearing to outweigh all other considerations. Although as incapable of guiding her own steps as the steps of another, Zee agonised over the right and wrong of every question, and the delicate perceptions of the similarly circumstanced only can understand the surgings of her soul, hungering for leave to love, yet baulked in its every effort to grasp hold of its ideal, of anything indeed. True love lies only in respect for its object, and respect has its roots in sincerity and truth—nowhere else. Urged repeatedly to take everything on trust in reference to Wrax and "religion" in particular, Zee rebelled, crying inwardly: "No; God has given me sight. Don't, for pity's sake, put out my eyes. Let me see my road and make the best of it, be it never so stony." And so should say all girls with better results than did Zee, whose mental eyes, shame to herself, had been blinded by false teaching.

All unconsciously to herself, however, matters were drawing to a close in Wrax's mind, and in demanding her release Zee had innocently rushed upon her doom, for Wrax urged marriage with a persistency which brooked no denial. Zee begged to defer her answer indefinitely, assigning sufficient reason for so doing, to which, however, Wrax refused to listen. Finally, Zee's consent was made subject to the approval of both families, which was too readily accorded to please her.

She knew instinctively that Wrax, ever infirm of purpose, was not strong to bear trouble, and feared to drive him to desperation. Nevertheless, the vital question opened a yawning chasm at her feet, from which she shrank back appalled. The risk was great, and great the stake. Wrax's happiness, no less than her own, hung in the balance; and she could not, however romantic, trust to marriage changing his nature. Only to the highest type of men, of whom Wrax was not, is the wife dearer than the bride. Zee remarked with intense pain that he was not domestic in his tastes, that he disliked reading and the society of women, though he never wearied of her own; and long she pondered over *how* home was to be made attractive to such a man after its novelty had worn off. Too often the wife, in common with other treasures,

loses value in possession, even though the oughts and crosses of married life make her incomparably more worthy of esteem than when, as a thoughtless young thing, the husband first won her.

Could she take him for better for worse with such a pretence of affection as hers seemed? For really she herself found it impossible to determine whether she did or did not love him. In all her helplessness, strength all gone, Zee promised to become Wrax's wife; and thenceforward until the marriage was consummated knew no peace, casting a gloom for a season over the coming event by refusing to hear it mooted. As to how many tears were shed by her silently and alone over the necessary preparations it were vain to conjecture. Her sadness, in truth, became too abiding to escape even casual observers, and a sister of Wrax demanded its cause of Sadai, who, with an impatient shrug, disposed of the question, saying: "Oh, it's just like Zee; she must be unlike everyone else." Unreflecting Sadai!

The father and Zee—who is bound to accord the "quiet half hour" he requests—are to be closeted again, and Zee is to be placed martyr-like on the rack, a proceeding as painful to him as to her. Confessing that she was "a riddle to him," the father deplored "the change which had come over her, deeming her cruelly unjust to Wrax, whose affection she had proved, and who was himself all that could be desired," etc. Then followed various questions which naturally suggested themselves to the father, to each of which Zee gave an emphatic "No." Then, with much loving counsel, the father urged: "Be your own merry self again, for no one can look forward with pleasure to an event which should be joyous so long as it is tabooed as if the bridal were a burial, the wedding-dress a shroud."

Zee's words were few. Not even to her father would she whisper of her distrust, and her whole nature revolted against being regarded as a victim. Fancying that no one had a right to meddle with her sorrows, she deemed pity an impertinence, and would have none of it. She therefore hid—no one could do it

better than she—a heavy heart under a glad countenance. And although to the reader is given a peep into Doubting Castle, to mere onlookers the girl appeared what she really was indeed, a buoyant, irrepressible spirit, riding the crest of every wave, though now and then dipping into the valley of humiliation on her own account.

But few men would envy the bridegroom of such a bride; yet Wrax knew it all, and his joy was boundless; he was content with such love as she had to offer, knowing full well her devotion to duty would be as unswerving as if inspired by love. To secure her at any price was his object, believing that his happiness would secure her own, as it would assuredly, if it were of the right kind.

Despite Zee's fruitless introspection of herself and of Wrax as far as practicable, the wedding-day was nigh at hand. The bride being involuntarily enshrined in all hearts for the nonce, a shimmering of beauty, real so long as it lasts however foreign to the object, encompasses her whose brow is adorned with the triple crown of love, honor, trust; whose self-forgetfulness renders her sufficiently consciously unconscious to be indifferent to spectators. Of whose number Zee was not, and now that her turn had come, she would not endure the gaze of familiar faces, but gained a tardy consent to "the knot" being tied in London, where privacy could be bought. She had taken a lively interest in the marriage of other girls —in the pretty gilt-gingerbread show, that is—and as hers was the first wedding in the family, she could not escape quite all the customary parade.

The night before the bridal, herself and Merlee, like two nuns bent on an errand of mercy, slipped quietly from the home-nest to town—the world and his wife being none the wiser for the flitting. If the bride is happy on whom the sun shines, what is the bride on whom the rain pours in sheets? What a morning that was! How could Dame Nature look so glum? Her sweetest caress should have made her child a concentrated sunbeam, rippling in a sea of gladness, for she is to stamp her seal—her one priceless gem of

girlish innocence—on the soul of her betrothed, and to be to him henceforth life's guiding-star, shining with ever-increasing lustre. But the rain it raineth all the time, and in vain the eyes turn wistfully skywards to catch the Dutchman's tiny patch of blue. The very sparrows were drenched to the skin, and the leaves of the trees wept as if bewailing Zee's untimely end —the end of the first stage of life's journey.

It was, moreover, imperative, for some sufficient reason, that the ceremony should take place an hour earlier than arranged, which made the wedding doubtful for that day, since a telegram could not expedite matters; it would but cross country friends on their way to town. The uncle, whose house was to be the stage of the tragedy, at once so old and so new, fumed at express speed, until Zee—who fancied she had placed herself in God's hand, and was prepared for the fabled "slip" at the last moment—laughed him out of countenance.

There was no loophole for Zee to creep out of; for lo! the habitually unpunctual Wrax, the radiantly happy Wrax, had taken the precaution to travel overnight—the safer the nearer the beloved, on the outskirts of whose dwelling he hovered. Hurrah! here they come, the whole troop of wedding-guests, the good father bringing up the rear—guests arrayed in bridal finery, and so laden with flowers and the sunshine of surcharged hearts, as to put cloudland to the blush.

And presently the deed was done. The happy pair had stood together at the altar, and uttered, with becoming dignity, the irrevocable "I will," Zee at least tremblingly realising her position.

After all was over Wrax confessed that he trembled only lest Zee should "show the white feather at the last moment." Put him to open shame? That would not have been like Zee, she was too honorable for that; she had too long looked her fate, which she now accepted as the will of heaven, steadily in the face, for any such whimsical nonsense. The only hitch in the august proceedings was the non-arrival of Zee's brother, whom the missive telling of

an earlier knot-tying had failed to reach. Expecting to cut a figure in the auspicious event by helping to tie the knot securely, the young swell, who was just beginning to "find himself," and was consequently on short-commons as to knick-knacks, had had a white waistcoat made expressly for the occasion; this, since he had missed the treat of treats, looked like a ruinous piece of extravagance, the mention of which, together with the disappointment experienced, caused the tears to roll down the poor lad's cheeks, and his grief was so touchingly simple that Zee freely mingled pearly drops with his. But little was needed to open the flood-gates.

Having done her part bravely up to that moment, she was rewarded by the cheery though watery rays of the noonday sun, as they danced in and out amid the delicacies of the breakfast-table, seated in the centre of which the bride, on being addressed by her new title, let her eye unconsciously run the length of the board in search of the lady in question, and was suddenly brought to her senses, and was dyed in rose-bloom on observing that the entire party was ready to explode at her expense.

She had, of course, the honor of putting the knife into the cake "fit for a duchess," the doing of which was followed by the usual complimentary toasts and speeches, all being hilarity until the newly-wed bade adieu to the glum, ungracious city. Not yet could Zee take Wrax for her all, she must have her favorite sister, Merlee, with them on their tour; and the trio spirited themselves out of sight without any demonstration of old shoes. The cream and flavor of the feast had departed; but the friends left behind, refusing to be extinguished, betook themselves with one accord to Richmond, where they were entertained full royally by expectant relatives. And nothing occurred to cloud the enjoyment of a silver-letter day.

CHAPTER V.

DOVES.

ONE of the maddest, merriest evenings gave cordial welcome to the trio as they dived far into the heart of Kent to explore its beauties. Nature put on bridal robes as Zee laid hers aside. What a gorgeous dress of living green the good mother wore, after having fresh washed her face, and smoothed out every wrinkle! The sun, meanwhile blithely holding the glass up to her, crooned over her "good-night." But she was in such a wild humor that her eyelids fell with fitful wantonness, though spicy breezes wafted her to the land of nod. The very birds, too, whose matins had been interrupted by the downpour, were loth to leave their daily task undone.

During their jaunt the travellers visited an aunt of the girls, one of the kindliest creatures extant, to whom the grosser forms of selfishness were impossible. And with much wifely wisdom she counselled Zee to be hand, head, heart, love, duty, and delight to her husband; to anticipate his every word and whim, and all that. Possessing unbounded faith in mankind, the aunt little thought that ill-judged devotion could minister only to selfishness in the evilly disposed; so her wise saws were not laid by with her sheets in lavender, the only strife between herself and her husband being how best to emulate each other in self-forgetful love.

Applauding the aunt's policy to the echo, Wrax vowed he would recommend all Benedicts to take their wives to her for good advice, which, if well followed, would prevent all domestic ills. Zee, though never rash in making promises, accepted the said policy in all seriousness. If her judgment approved, it was

easy, yea delightful, to her to obey. Her father ruled by love; Wrax would be as gentle and true as he.

Girls, as a rule, start well on the untried path, and the responsibilities of wifehood improve them, whereas husbands too often deteriorate grievously. Bolstered up in the belief insensibly fostered by social, educational, and political advantages, that marriage entitles a man to do as he likes, even though he likes to do wrong, *Self* is enthroned god forthwith, and the husband not unfrequently rules by everything but love. There ought to be but one code of morals between husband and wife. William and Mary must ascend the throne together; and he or she who knows how to rule will say very little about it—certainly never suffer the two wills to clash, nor be for ever thrusting the sceptre into the other's face. What matter whose hand holds the sceptre, if the rule be right?

Saying that he wished to speak to her, Wrax led Zee into another room, of which he locked the door. Then, taking her hands lovingly, sorrowfully, he suddenly became convulsed with emotion. Attempting to speak, he but wept the more excitedly, crying, "O, Zee, Zee, Zee!" Possessing no clue to any confession he might desire to make, Zee, though as anxious to share his sorrows as his joys, could not help him by so much as a word. But, becoming alarmed, she tenderly implored him to be calm—words which served but to increase his anguish, until at length she begged him to defer whatever communication he might desire to make. Oh, fatal blunder! A bad beginning for Zee. She ought not to have left that room until he had told her what he had to tell. Together with the agitation, alas! passed away the desire to take her into his confidence, to have done which would probably have given a different coloring to their whole lives. He never once reverted to the circumstance, and Zee felt that confidence must be voluntary to be of any worth; besides which, no Delilah-like efforts of hers, could she have stooped to make them, would have wormed his secrets from him.

Short as sweet was the mythical "moon," leaving *the more honey* wherewith to consecrate their new

dwelling, to which they slyly wended their way earlier than expected, hoping thereby to forestall the jubilant announcement that So and So "had brought home his bride." Vain hope! Scarcely had they sheltered beneath the old roof-tree than the bells of the various churches rung out their tale-telling peal, which impudent officiousness must be paid for, else will the backward ringing of the bells publish far and wide the meanness of the newly wed, who for the time being are so over-ballasted with honors, merited or otherwise, that they have not the courage to torture the ears of the "oldest inhabitant" by the backward ringing of the would-be-joyous bells.

Having spent a pleasant evening with friends, the young couple started for their own cosy home, the door of which was opened by Emma, whose every feature beamed a glad welcome on the heads of the household as they entered their, in a new sense, own home—the home in which Zee then for the first time set foot, so fearful was she prior to marriage of being suspected of "nesting." But now as they, Adam and Eve in Paradise, whisked in and out and round about each sly corner, they declared there was nothing half so sweet in life as their own snug cot, which the sisters had made home-like.

Zee sighed after a degree of wifely perfection by no means easy of attainment. Having read "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," her ideal woman was very much after Miss Hannah More's mind, considering herself the more perfect the more Moreish she became.

Left to herself in her new home, Zee gathered sweets bee-fashion as she flitted about putting a hallowing touch on all things great and small, taking possession of Wrax and his belongings in the fullest sense, for had he not endowed her—her, mind; not himself—with all his worldly goods? "They are mine," she murmured; "he has given them all to me, but he is better than them all." "He must be God's good gift," she argued, "since he had not forbidden the banns," in arriving at which conclusion a millstone rolled off her heart, and she dared to be thankfully, joyously happy. *Her lot* was by no means a hard lot, after all.

Having given herself, her best energies would follow, and her new duties, rightly appreciated, would become the best possible recreation for both body and mind.

Busy fancy wrapped Zee in Elysium. How could one who lived on day-dream unsubstantialities be expected to think of such mundane affairs as eating and drinking? Oh, for the rod of the necromancer! Behold the dinner hour, and with it the hungry Wrax; but the gods had not provided the feast! The empty larder flashed on Zee's mind in an instant, and, throwing up her hands, she looked at Wrax aghast. Divining the state of the case, he kissed away Zee's regrets a thousand times over as, laughing heartily, he promised to make capital against a rainy day out of all her blunders, asking, further, how long she considered it necessary they should live on air? The old home, to which Emma was despatched with a note telling of the dilemma, was better than the conjurer's rod, for in double quick time Emma placed on the table a piping hot repast, to which even the ghost of a Zee did ample justice.

Hey-day, young wife! wool-gathering already? What would Miss Hannah have said of her disciple? "No dinner," was a standing joke against the model housewife, and she was well roasted instead of the joint. The mother would have amply supplied their larder had they not taken time by the forelock. Since dreamland and fairies of wonder-working notoriety had failed Zee at the critical moment, Emma, who had concluded that her master and mistress were to dine from home, since she heard no mention of dinner, was enjoined by Zee to refresh her memory should it again play truant, lest Wrax should fall into many a snare, in his haste to grow rich out of the capital her blunders supplied. What a beautiful course life's rugged journey would become if a like glamor were thrown over its small vexations! It is strange that simple joys should pall; perpetual love-making, like perpetual motion, awaits discovery; self-love is the bane of the former, and of the latter, may be, who knows?

Zee's mishaps were a godsend to Wrax, whose delight

was extravagant in having, as he said, "his wife all to himself in his own home." He had been kept at arm's length so long, that his now merry gambols were the safety-valve of his long pent-up emotions. For Zee had seated him upon his throne as her lord by right divine; having absolved him of all treachery, though with many serpent wiles he once tried to hold her with so tight a grip that, with all his tact and diplomacy, he could never feel sure that he had gained an inch in her good graces.

And thankfully taking note of his hilarity, she met him with a gay enthusiasm which told better than words how perfect was her trust. And as Wrax went out into the world so old and yet so new, with a bounding step indicative of a lightness of heart pleasant to witness, Zee said fondly: "This must last. Gleesome and frisky as a kitten now, sir, you must not settle down into a grumpy old Tom with long, sharp claws; nor must you sport with me as if I were a toy. Our love shall grow young as we grow old together, that each in the heart of the other may fill as large and green a space fifty years hence as to-day, or woe-betide us. Hand in hand, strong in that oneness of soul which alone constitutes true union, we will, with bold front, together breast the full tide of prosperity or adversity as it advances." Meanwhile Wrax placed her on the pinnacle of the temple of fancy, saying: "Admire my idol, all ye that pass by!" What would Miss Pout have said to the "idol"? And if in her May-day splendor Zee was made too much of, it may stand over against the period when she received justice at the hands of no one.

The to be or not to be questionings of Zee's mind having been silenced, she was the last to doubt the propriety of giving full swing to a merriment guileless as free—to roll up the sunshine as a scroll in haste to meet the cloud, to strew her path with thorns instead of with roses. Nay, verily, she was brimful and running over with animal spirits, sparkling with diamond dew, as, putting on her coronation robes, she surveyed her future from the hill-top reaching to heaven, converting her once waste howling wilderness into a

bower of content. Never in courting-time had she been half so winsome.

And Wrax had found his tongue. Indeed, he continued so rapturously absorbed he was quite another Wrax, all glorious; and honoring him with a reverence her father's example instilled, Zee would never tire of looking up to him with wide-open, child-like eyes. His love had been no mercenary speculation, no golden reasons had dazed his brain. Believing that Zee was better than gold, he had taken her just as she was, with a disinterestedness quite verdant to those who in marriage sometimes bow so low before the golden calf that they crawl ever afterwards. Gold may be bought at too high a price, and if happiness pure and unalloyed be the quest, it were better to adorn the brow with the beads of honest toil.

As month followed month the honeymoon spread itself out interminably, as the doves revelled in their second Eden. Its spell would never be broken; there were no dregs to such blissful intoxication, no gall in such an entrancing cup; threescore years and ten would find their Eden only the more refined. The triple powers of world, flesh and devil would be powerless to quench the torch lit at and fed from the Zee-shrine—the Zee who found she had to keep square too long to support the dignity due to her position, so accepted wifely homage with her usual ease and impudence.

Having commenced business in an extensive way the day after he attained his majority, and both families being as able as willing to give Wrax substantial support, a career of honorable usefulness opened before him such as is rarely presented to so young a man. Naught but himself could come between him and his wildest hopes until prosperity's cup would scarcely carry a rose-leaf in addition. As a matter of course, Wrax's capital would be locked up in his business, and from the first week of marriage he very properly allowed his wife to share his monetary anxieties, and the dreadful "bills" becoming due *this week,* next week, always, as it seemed to this inexperienced girl, frightened her possibly more than

Wrax intended, for she could scarcely dare to eat with those "bills" hanging over her head. But, assuming those "bills" caused her needless alarm, if he erred at all, Wrax erred on the right side. It was better at starting to make their wants and tastes few and simple than, by rushing to the opposite extreme, to drive all before them for a season, then tumble down with a crash.

Responsibilities often change witless girls into reasonable women, women who prefer serge to satin rather than imperil their husband's reputation; for it is so essentially woman's nature to save, to conserve all good, that wasteful extravagance does violence to her nature, so much so, in fine, that meanness is one of the many vices she has to conquer. And the men who have extravagant wives, if such there be, made a false start on the threshold of married life in all probability.

Having put life's harness on, Zee would never wince under a fair share of its burdens. Nothing pleased her better than the taxing of her ingenuity in culinary operations, so long as only moderately rich dishes were expected from nail-parings. She modestly professed to stop short at creation. Deftly, too, her magic needle could make old things new, but in those young days she had no old things to metamorphose, an ample wardrobe having been provided. For wardrobe Sadai would have substituted trousseau doubtless; but she was fond of "expressive French," and talked French to Zee—to Zee, you know, who knew nothing of her mother tongue even. You can fancy how "expressive" it would be. And notwithstanding that Sadai condescended to interpret her "expressive French," Zee's mother-wit occasionally despoiled Sadai's "larnin'" of its gloss. To the plain-speaking Zee all French and Latin words and phrases (except such as have become popularised) in English books looked very like pedantry.

CHAPTER VI.

A Cloud as big as a Man's Hand.

HAVING gone thus far with Zee, does the reader demand that she shall continue to skip merrily down-hill, carolling bird-fashion, until her voice is lost in the far distance? Such were a fitting termination to a novel; but such is not life. It is a pity to let the curtain fall on the girl, but there is a dark background to bring into view. Tulle-illusion may be a pretty web for a bride, but it does not wear. Zee had all too soon to don the serge of this work-a-day world.

Professing to have flirted with his wife longer than was business-like, "neglected books" claimed the attention of Wrax, whose office, in which much of his time must necessarily be spent, was, unfortunately, a short distance from the house, which he would leave of an evening ostensibly to "lock himself in his office and write hard." Demurring to his running away, Zee promised, if he would bring his books home, that her electrical presence should clear his brain and make the pen fly over the page with unwonted celerity. To which Wrax, who was quick in expedients, made so many reasonable objections, that Zee reluctantly conceded the point, and he kissed away her half-smile, half-pout with a cheery "I won't be long," as he hurried off night after night.

Strangers calling of an evening occasionally, to see Wrax on business, were sent to the office, and on finding it vacant returned to the house with a message, and excusing his absence on receiving the message, Wrax not infrequently said too much; for his wife discovered quite incidentally again and again that he *misstated facts.* But on hinting at these seeming discrepancies to Wrax, his explanations were so prompt

and feasible that Zee accepted them fully; nor did a shadow of doubt arise in her mind until his hours became irregular, and she observed with pain that—although tolerant of her solicitude, even anticipating it by making it appear he was constantly the victim of vexatious interruptions—he disliked being asked, never so lovingly, "where he had been, or why he had lingered so long?"

"Writing to do" being an insufficient blind, "important business transactions" calling him hither and thither henceforth offered a wide-open door of escape. They dwelt among their own people, whose visiting circle was a wide one, and to Zee the kindly interchange of social amenities was pleasant recreation; but to Wrax, who in thirsting for "life" refused to be debarred more congenial pursuits, private parties were an intolerable infliction, though he bowed to "the claims of society" sufficiently to avoid remark. Or when "business" excused his absence to his wife, he so sedulously avoided saying where he had been that, try as Zee did to lull a suspicion of wrong-doing, she failed to cheat herself into believing that all was right.

Then Zee bethought her of the strange emotion Wrax displayed a few days after their marriage—was the key to its solution in her hand? Had he, as a bachelor, contracted habits, which he believed would be easily overcome with a wife and a home of his own? Was it of these bad habits, which now proved too strong for him, he desired to make a full confession? The traitor-fear of losing Zee would seal his lips before marriage, and in the first flush of a brighter future, how could he dash her newly-acquired trust? She would have been painfully shocked, doubtless, but she would have hoped so much from the mere fact of his owning his weakness, that notwithstanding that her quick sensibilities would have rightly gauged the adventitious circumstances that environ the weakling, and from which she was powerless to shield him, encouraging words girding him round with a sweet magnetism would have inspired him with the manly resolve to shun every *path that leads astray*, making him at once strong to

resist forbidden pleasures, and insensibly drawing him homewards.

Viewed from a distance, his coveted treasure appeared to have his world at her feet: marriage was to lift him at a bound into a purified region; and having faith in Zee's power to save him from his baser self, he failed to realise that its unattainableness alone gave value to his *koh-i-noor*; faith become fruition, his old craving for excitement, "life", demanded fresh stimulus.

But having mastered the impulse to confess his sin (all violation of God's laws, moral and physical, is sin), he guarded his secret with a miser's vigilance, congratulating himself possibly that it was safe; and yet from what a life of misery the confession might have saved him! It was one of Wrax's proudest boasts that he "never made admissions on principle." Pity his "principles" had not made admissions unnecessary; and to effectually combat what might be wrong in his vaunted "principles" much skill and judgment would be called into requisition, since to a man of lax morality unflinching rectitude would look very like tyranny.

Of the evils of excessive drinking in all their ghastliness, Zee was utterly ignorant; she yet knew instinctively that to tamper with their insidious approach must be suicidal to all manliness. She had, too, some faint idea how tame and insipid the quiet enjoyments of home must become to one who loved the giddy hilarity of the commercial room and its "convivial bowl," for whose sake Wrax's subterfuges became at length so flagrant that as his eyes fell before her penetrating gaze, in anything but a reassuring manner, Zee could hear her heart beat. He was all the world to her henceforth; to him her whole soul was pledged; he must be noble and manly. Tenderly solicitous of his best interests, it was Zee's ambition to help to secure them, to which end she told him what his conduct appeared to her. But telling her she "knew nothing of business to which he must apply himself in good earnest," he toyed with her "hair-splitting," adding lightly: "My home is

my castle, and you are my queen. I shall never tire of it or of you. Would you, silly child, pin me to your side, and give me thimble-pie if I attempted to bolt? My Zela would never wish me to neglect business." No! anything like spooneying was distasteful to her, but she had the sense to know that business proper does not, ought not, to occupy the whole of a man's time. Zee was practically more correct than intelligent unfortunately; only by example could she appeal to Wrax's sense of justice—man's noblest attribute; and if himself and his conscience had parted company, her chance of saving him would be small indeed. Moreover, the grace of fitness so completely makes or mars one's actions, that it is possible to err even with purity of motive. She had gained really nothing by her talk with Wrax; by idle banter he had waived the question of right and wrong, but he wound up with: "Well, I won't be a naughty boy again."

It would never do to arouse suspicion thus early; hence, despite press of business and those everlasting books, Wrax walked and visited with his wife, quite at his ease and willing to be pleased; and resolved to believe the best, Zee showed in many ways how perfect was her trust. Never would she relax her efforts to secure his happiness; would they be reciprocated, appreciated even? It takes two to make married life happy.

Alas! his heart was already truant; vain were Zee's efforts to tie him to home and duty. Very guardedly, with his old eel-like slipperiness, Wrax contrived to steal away to "business." More painful to Zee than the dread of his becoming too fond of the glass—so low a vice could not be entertained even in thought—was the hardihood with which he prevaricated. Was he deliberately acting and uttering lies, arming himself against his wife in a panoply of lies? Fearful questions to force themselves on the truth-loving, few months' old wife! How could he wish to hide from her, his best friend, how his idle hours were spent? Lie to his wife! if false to all besides, and his fellows *brand him coward,* he will surely keep his home inviolo-

late, have one anchor sure and steadfast. Fear, lying, were so alien to Zee, she had no conception that naked truth could present a chilling aspect to a craven soul; truth was just what it wanted to make it strong. She had to learn that the love of drink indulged makes liars and cowards of all, women included.

Wrax was without excuse in seeking stimulants abroad; his cellar had been stocked with wines and spirits by Zee's father, to which Wrax himself added ale, etc.; and Zee failed to see why their moderate use should afford less pleasure in his own home than in the public room. And putting it as a question to him, on whom she scorned to urge abstinence, believing it to be altogether unnecessary, he readily admitted in theory what he denied in practice, viz., that he "ought to shun the company he sought, since it was wholly corrupting." And on his boon companions Zee, woman-like, vented her impotent wrath, convinced that they exercised despotic sway over him. But no; headstrong to a degree, Wrax stood like a rock in his proud self-will; strong to do the right, choosing to do the wrong.

The first Christmastide was a sad one to Zee. Returning at midnight on Christmas eve, Wrax had to her excited fancy taken too much, and her cheeks crimsoned at the bare thought that his tastes leaned ever so little that way. Then, as always, herself and Wrax joined in the family gathering next day in the old home; and if a portentous cloud rested on her usually high spirits, and a something trembled on the eyelids, she played hide-and-seek with them. No one must guess that all was not right within—that a grimacing mute, waving sable plumes in her face, had already posted himself on the threshold: not that he would be permitted to enter, never! Overtaken in a fault Wrax might have been, but given over to appetites of a degrading tendency, impossible!

Bleak and wintry at best her reflexions must have been, as she surveyed her simple, yet to an appreciative mind, costly wares. Sated of her society, already; *his home all* that it should be, but it was not enough. *The home* and herself had become less than nothing,

in truth, to the only being whose appreciation she prized.

And the secret of his indifference lay in the fact that Zee had become his property, his slave, by marriage. Wrax would have been a devoted husband—an immeasurably better and happier man, and Zee a by no means worse woman, had she been free—free as Wrax was free. He would then have respected in her what he valued above all things in himself, the *subtle potency of recognised being*—the all of dignity comprehended in the words *personal liberty;* but having become a wife, she was comparatively worthless.

Yes Zee, being that worthless thing a wife, thou art safe; and Wrax kisses his hand to thee, as he goes out into the night, willingly turning his back on thee and heaven; heaven he'll take at a venture, if earth but yield him one long draught of sensual delights. In courting days he never dared lay down the weapons of his warfare, but, as far as Zee was concerned, kept his armour bright perforce; now, glaring meteors lure him on, he knows where to step and when to stop, and of what cup to sip with safety: yes he is wise, and would fain persuade himself that he strolls in "by-path meadow," that the wisdom of the serpent may extract the greater sweetness from the dove. Ignorance is innocence to thee; he would keep thy soul pure, that he may be the more at liberty to sin—a game too expensive for two to play at. Oh! the strength of a perverted will. *The will is the man,* and if it be perverted the man is lost until it be restored.

Zee had left no stone unturned which could contribute to the comfort of home—there was nothing more within her reach in that direction; she, nevertheless, redoubled, if that were possible, the effort to make herself personally attractive, and if she failed, what chance, except to be killed by inches, would a tamely good wife have had with such a man as Wrax? Such as she is, Zee is presented in homely guise, that her very naturalness may touch a tender human chord; and if a niche of sympathy be cheerfully accorded her, it is to be hoped she will wear better than do the *cooing, flummery*-voiced women—the very incarna-

tion of selfishness—who are falsest when they seem most fair.

Viewing the fortuitous circumstances which environed Wrax, he may have been the envy of many a youth who must plod wearily in the teeth of adverse fate; but let him plod courageously on and on, concerned only to know his work well done. It was Wrax's misfortune that he did too well—had much too smooth and easy a course. Prosperity has whelmed many a man whom adversity would have nerved to endure nobly. We must, nevertheless, see things as they are. The true man rises superior to every trial and temptation, whereas the moral coward, the man of the deliberately perverted will, is certain, sooner or later, to go to the wall, however felicitously propped up. Unstable as water, because ever hankering after what was beyond his reach, Wrax was better and worse by turns. Now Zee's hopes ran high, now they fell with sickening foreboding; but even at his worst she met him with a welcoming smile and an inspiriting voice, quite too true to have a false ring in it, for the anxious concern she then felt for him was a something vastly better than the whimsical conceit that is white heat to-day and an icicle to-morrow. White heat in the affections soon wears itself out.

After unusual excesses, so degraded did Wrax become in his own esteem that, seeing nothing but his deserts, he literally tore his hair and gnashed his teeth in his bitter self-reproaches. He could not so much as look at his wife even while he clung frantically to her, begging her to "curse him" for what he called his "cruelty to her," as he called loudly on heaven to witness the sincerity of his repentance and his promises of amendment, blessing his wife no less loudly for having borne "patiently with him."

To his humiliation not one word of Zee's intentionally added a pang, although she earnestly implored him to "crush the weakness in its bud." In its bud! She little knew how long the tempter had him in possession—how long he had hugged his self-imposed chains. With her arms round his neck and her warm breath on his cheek, it were hard to tell whose tears

fell fastest, or which felt weakest, as they knelt together craving pardon for the past and strength for the future. And as the waves of sorrow rolled over his soul, it was so beautiful to see his better nature asserting itself that, abounding in hope, Zee took heart of grace. She was not too immaculate to go with him where he went, although in her anxious care there was much of the pitiful tenderness a mother feels for her poor maimed child. For, oh! when the sinner is your husband, you are in a sense linked with him in his degradation, and you go backwards to cover him with a mantle all of shame and pain. Still—you cover him.

But Wrax grew impatient of the would-be ministering spirit. Yet how much Zee could have done for him—nay, how much he could have done for himself! All things good and great were possible to him; but, alas! short-lived were his attempts to conquer wayward appetites. Ere Zee could make ready the fatted calf, Wrax was at his old tricks again, and Zee's head hung like a bulrush.

It is strange that Wrax should have desired to enter a family so dead against flagrant immorality as was Zee's. Surely his associates, whose tastes were as his own, must have possessed gay, thoughtless, pleasure-loving, play-going sisters, running greedily to every excess of riot, from whom Wrax might have chosen a wife. Yes; but his horse-leech passions demanded that his wife should save that he might spend. He never tired of preaching economy to her.

In the present instance, as is not unfrequently the case, the doings of the "graceless scamp" are all too late exposed. And a lady-friend told Zee that, "feeling certain that, if Wrax's habits were known to her he would not continue her accepted suitor," she had determined to enlighten her. But his "scandalous proceedings" being a fruitful theme of gossip to a gossipping circle, it was taken for granted that her family must be cognisant thereof; hence the lady's husband peremptorily forbade what he denounced as her "interference."

And a similar non-intervention policy silenced other lips possibly. So certain, indeed, were Wrax's more

dissolute companions that the courtship would "come to nothing," knowing Zee's all but puritanic strictness, that bets ran high and at long odds against the marriage, which bets, together with the fact—known to Wrax, but of which Zee was in blissful ignorance—that another and a better man longed, as the phrase is, "to cut him out," served, perchance, to whet Wrax's ardor in pursuit of Zee.

The marriage consummated, the betting fraternity may have said: "See what your pious ones will wink at to secure a husband for their daughter!" It had been better to have assured themselves that the "pious ones" knew what the man was. Such haunts and habits as Wrax affected were an abomination to Zee's father, brothers, and friends, who were, moreover, incapable of believing deceit to be deliberately practised; hence the ease with which Wrax turned aside the shafts of suspicion. And Zee could but hope that they might never know of the blight resting upon her husband, who looked so black in comparison with them.

Furthermore, prior to marriage Wrax had a sudden severe fit of illness; he was long delirious, raving wildly and fighting with monsters, that were, he declared, crawling over him, over the bed, and filling the room. The doctor called the disease "congestion of the brain." Zee now believes it to have been *delirium tremens.* Thus every one seemed to conspire to keep her in ignorance of his true state. Late though it was, it afforded Zee a grim satisfaction to know that Wrax's habits were of no recent growth; but for which knowledge she would have added to her galled shoulders the burden of a great fear, that she had disappointed him, however innocently.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT IS IS WRONG.

"UNTO us a son is given" has carried joy to myriad households since angels heralded the lowly birth of the Divine Man; and each bud of promise is a fresh throb of love from the Great Father's heart. Softly folded in viewless wings the given and the taken are ever ascending and descending Jacob's ladder. The taken bear upwards love's heavy-laden sighs, which return in heart's-ease to those who yearn for the pet lamb and its merry gambols; the given bring down from above stray notes of the never-ending song of peace and goodwill.

Looking forward with absorbing interest to the advent of the little stranger, a softened radiance lit up the young mother's face, as giving fond welcome to her jewel from the spirit-land, Zee sunned herself in the newly opened sanctuary of purest bliss. How much of weal or woe, by her moulding the wee thing might one day express! The possible good made her happy; the possible ill made her tremble. Will Wrax be God or devil to his boy? A strange question to ask of one who, given his bride scarcely twelve months before, had vowed for her sake to do and dare all that became a man.

Zee augured hopefully from the father's pride in the new toy. Yes, the boy will prove his good angel, beckoning him away from the fellowship of those who have but too successfully estranged him from home, to which home the child will give fresh interest, as winding himself into and filling the father's heart, he will be constrained to wear the responsibilities of paternity *bravely. What sacrifices* will he not make, but that

love owns no sacrifice. He will be the richer, the happier, for his every act of self-forgetfulness.

Heir to all but his father's infirmities, Rex, being the first of the third generation on the mother's side, was hailed enthusiastically by a swarm of very youthful aunts and uncles. The eyes of one small aunt were flooded on finding that her nephew had arrived before she had "quite finished his pretty shoes." But she was consoled by Wrax's saying: "Well, I don't think he'll run before they're done, if you make haste and finish them." Away she flew on the wings of the wind, to spread the glad tidings and finish the shoes.

Despite Zee's professed indifference to good looks in men, when her own boy was under criticism, the "crow" vanity was not a little gratified to find that Rex was voted a "second edition of Wrax." One aunt exclaimed, "Why, he has features!" The more perfect the boy, the better fitted for his task; for the little rogue had his work to do from the moment he saw the light. Saw the light, indeed! he slept his time away, nor allowed his mother to see the color of his eyes.

Wrax had of late so far humored his wife as to have his books brought home of an evening when he had "writing to do;" and their boy was but a few days old when, kissing Zee "Good-night," Wrax said: "I shall sit late writing, but I shall want nothing, so all can go to bed;" and he thereupon made a needless parade of locking up the house. The diligent scribe had, in truth, locked and unlocked the street-door and taken himself off to drink the health of wife and child with his roystering companions, which could probably be done with more unrestrained convivality in the bar-parlor than at home.

Every young mother who values her husband's sympathy will understand how cruelly mean the double lie appeared to Zee. But for his having extinguished the gas, thereby necessitating nurse's return to Zee's room for a light, on finding that something wanted during the night had been forgotten, Zee would *never have* known of his having decamped. The *skeleton* again in all its grimness! And that she

might watch for his home-coming, the silly child requested that the door of her room might be left open. Not until the small hours of the morning did she hear the chink of his latch-key. He then lit his candle, and crept noiselessly up the carpeted stairs, but extinguished his light on finding his wife's bed-room door open, which he passed with averted face. Zee made no sigh, lest she should betray him to nurse; but he pleaded guilty next morning in spite of himself as his eyes fell before Zee's appealing glance.

No wonder that the doctor, ignorant of the weary vigil the anxious wife had kept the livelong night, found her feverish and ill, worse instead of better that day, and puzzled over the cause. Wrax, however, was on his best behavior for a while, and one ray of hope, then as always, lifted Zee out of cloudland. She could not nurse the dolefuls; she forgot herself ere she was aware. But as her strength returned, his pleasant home became irksome to the truant-hearted man, whose French leave of absence was again sheltered by the old plea of "business." His good resolutions were but as tinder, ignited by a single vicious thought; and, great as were her resources, Zee sorrowfully realised that she was powerless to help him. She possessed no new galaxy of appreciable arts wherewith to wean him from looking over the home-line for what was still beyond his reach.

While yet Rex's age was counted by weeks, his father bought, and furnished in excellent keeping with the house, a handsome property, to which they at once removed. But to Zee, notwithstanding her appreciation of material comforts, all was hollow and unsound —a fine house without a head—a head and no head. Still, of course, everything was outwardly inviting. A decorous top-dressing concealed unsightly weeds, since no one knew better than did Wrax the value of a nicely-balanced conformity to popular prejudices *re* chapel-going and suchlike—conformity in harmony with his way of looking at things—a canting way without doubt, the cant of the beer-barrel.

And, paradoxical though it appear, it was at once the depth *and shallowness* of Wrax's nature that created

the *want* in him of which Zee was so painfully conscious, yet unable to define. Nor has this *want* been invented to suit the narrative, which simply strings facts together regardless of seeming inconsistencies. To the reflective mind one thing must tally with another, because absolutely true—unless, indeed, the writer blunders in her mode of truth-telling.

Denied a liberal education, the greatest of all wrongs, the majority of women are incapable of putting their thoughts in such logical sequence as shall command the public ear. Trained by repression, however, woman is slowly beginning to realise her power to manufacture public opinion by direct appeals to her own sex, to whom facts are more potent than reasoning drawn out to infinitude. And if pioneer work be precious in proportion to the difficulties surmounted, this simple story, pioneer in its unvarnished truthfulness, must have its merits, for its labor has been prodigious. It is written by the unlearned for the unlearned, especially women and girls, to raise them in their own estimation, by proving that notwithstanding they have failed to reach the high standard of goodness possible to them even in their ignorance, that every difficulty vanishes, nevertheless, before the resolutely disciplined will. And though asking much of men, the writer expects nothing from this appeal except to set women thinking.

A member of the House of Commons some years since declared it to be his conviction that "women endured much needless domestic tyranny in private life, but that no efficient help could be afforded them until they themselves made their wrongs known and asked for redress," both of which objects, in addition to that above, this book in some small measure aims at.

And in showing something of the woes four walls hide, lifting life's heavy curtain higher than is wont, it is hoped that the present narrative will possess a throb of spring-tide vitality that will constrain the reader to exclaim; "This verily is life!" It were a weakness to draw upon the imagination, to open successive chambers of horror, now that much more than mere surface excitement is aimed at. For, unhappily,

to deeds of blood the public mind has already become so callous by familiarity that society's stopgaps, selfishly happy women even, like to have their ears tickled with a feeling half pleasure half pain, as they listen indolently to what they are pleased to call "frightfully exaggerated pictures of low life." A stab from such women for "raking up disagreeables," is the highest possible compliment. But one falls back falteringly before the outraged sensitiveness of the wife, who has trodden a like thorny road to that which Zee is treading; the wife whose love does but refine her own soul, as jealously guarding her secret from the world's rude prying and herself from its ruder pity, she clings convulsively to the lauded potentiality of silent suffering, and is thus saved from the hopelessness of despair.

Silent suffering! what recks the drunkard of it? it is but wood, hay and stubble in his path; of value only as, by playing into his hands, it screens him from observation, and helps him to trample out the life of his victim by slow degrees, than whom no other beast of burden whom he dare to maltreat is so completely under his thumb as the wife he has sworn to "love and cherish," whose forbearance (patronising tenderness from a slave-wife, think of it!) provokes his intensest hate and scorn. A man in his cups is "possessed," and his all but irresponsible power goads him to madness, as much as does the senseless endurance of his wife.

And the now slumbering but deep emotion of which good men are capable must be aroused by a pen dipped in warm blood—the very life-blood of suffering humanity—blood which shall drop like molten lead on the great universal heart of the nation, and burn with an intensity that refuses to heal, until the best energies of man and woman jointly are spent, all spent, in rending the very roots of the giant vices which are at once our boast and bane.

To tell woman "to do well the work that lies to her hand before she seeks an enlarged field of action" is to propose to her an impossible task; besides which, the *women who demand* legal freedom, full and un-

conditional, for their sex, are just the most capable women, in every respect, who will bear favorable comparison with any duty-loving man, and demand legal freedom, because they are at present crippled in their duty to their kind, especially to their children, for whose sake truth and justice must be exalted high above all compeers, that the line of demarcation between right and wrong may be clearly defined. Children are quick to see that might means right in the domestic economy; that the mother is a slave, and the mannishness of the father repeating itself in the little four-year-old, he will be found snubbing his mother with an insufferable audacity, encouraged too often by the father.

Seeking, as this story does, primarily to prove that woman *cannot* "do well the work that lies to her hand" in her present ignorance and degraded position, it attempts likewise to work out the meaning of vicarious suffering, which is substitutionary only in the high and holy sense of rendering suffering superfluous, when its lessons of wisdom and strength are practically appropriated. This is the fact of facts that needs to be emphasised with Calvary's awful emphasis.

And if life were read aright, it would teach that woman, by virtue of her more delicate organism, is nearer to the heart of things than man can ever be; and that the burden of suffering has been laid upon her that her delicate intuitive perceptions, healthfully developed, may work out the divine plan of the moral universe. The true woman's sympathies are wholly on the side of right, and if man and woman were one with the divine idea of oneness, every good man would be ten times the man he is, to defy the powers of darkness, to champion the cause of truth. But, instead of being helpful to each other, each sex is a standing problem to the other, and virtually as wide apart as are the poles; with an estrangement painful to contemplate. Furthermore, man never will work with woman appreciatively, until she is free as he *himself is free*; for so long as the law declares her *nonentity* men will profess to believe in her incom-

petency, despite their individual experience to the contrary, and, despising her co-operation, will continue to believe that, in her present undeveloped condition, she has reached the zenith of her powers and will remain what she is if educated as man is educated. A gratuitous insult! In the best and deepest humiliation possible to man, he has yet to learn that God knew what he was about when he gave woman, his most perfect work (a God-like compliment to both sexes), to man as "helpmeet." A help "meet" for all the walks of life, social, commercial, political, and religious; "meet" with an infinite sense of meetness as wide as man's being. But, thinking he knew better than God, man doomed woman to ignorance and, shutting her within doors, became to all intents and purposes his own and woman's betrayer—not her protector, as God intended. To be one with man, it is by no means necessary that woman should be ever at his side; the home is unquestionably her sphere; but a liberal education for woman would dignify the home as much as the mart; being much more necessary to woman, indeed, than to man if she is to be "helpmeet" in any worthy sense, since she forms the youthful mind, or it goes unformed, as a rule.

In vain men seek to resist the inevitable. The emancipation of woman, full and unconditional, must come, for the sake of all the liberties involved therein. It is the greatest cause now pending in the world; and conventionalism never cursed the world with a deeper curse than when it made the woman question unpopular. Human decrees that contravene the laws of God (men and women are equal in his sight) must yield when the two are brought into conflict. God will never do for man what man ought to do for himself. God has made woman's cause man's care, and he shirks it at his peril; man and woman shall rise or fall together; their interests are identical, not antagonistic. And to teach man that he *can* and *must* control the animal passions, and to so raise woman in her own esteem that she shall refuse to sacrifice herself to man's lusts, it is imperative that both sexes shall stand on an *equally free social*, and above all *moral*, platform.

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to cast a rosy glow around. Rarely
prise in her the sign of grief; he
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st misery, stifling a tumult of angry pas-
han mope over her woes, she has choked
ng tears, and hastily donning bonnet and
out into the green fields. In the birds,
e flowers, the breeze, there was life, sweet
ee; but, oh! how unlike the "life" Wrax
. Ignorant of the necessity of driving away
oughts, in order to return to her home with a
heart and free, a sister-in-law, habitually heedless
her remarks, twitted Zee—who was never so bur-
family cares as to neglect aught by such
h being "always out."
arough it all, that boy of hers was a con-
t, making up for much that was wanting
The mite talked and crowed, cut his
d his last in princely order; indeed, all
babydom gave him a friendly nod and

passed on; and Zee, by frequent walks with him and his nurse, kept her health up to the mark, so that a bad heart-ache on Wrax's account failed to make her its prey.

Comporting himself as if made for state occasions, the toddling nonsuch was exhibited for an hour at the double wedding of Sadai and Iva, the sisters being led to the altar at the same hour from the old home. They were too proud of their right-hand supporters to desire to hide away, and get the disagreeable affair over; so made gala-day of the interesting occasion for Mr. and Mrs. John Bull and small fry, "Queen's weather" with its broadest smiles gracing the scene. And, in due season, Sadai had the gratification of presenting her first-born to the gentleman who had doomed her to celibacy. But apple and orange bloom fade away with the brides, who are therefore dismissed with old shoes and good wishes.

As of old, the sisters' path is still strewn with roses; Zee's with sharp flints, and in going over the ground with her the reader's patience will be taxed, unless, entering of his own accord into the nature of the vice to which she is wedded, he can understand what it must have been to have lived her life. For love's dear sake, for the sake of the preventible misery which curses the world through drink, go every inch of the road with her. Tread with gentle footstep as the door is opened on the inner life of the neglected wife. Go, sit by the girl, place your cool hand on her fevered brow, feel the throb of her heart as the hurried life-blood courses through her veins; but, dumb in the fulness of soul-moving sympathy, utter never a word.

Yet suffer as she may, Zee is so entirely Zee at all points of the compass, that in her are seen the life, not death-throes, of a soul wrestling valiantly, however impotently, with threatening ills; low in the dust she lies awhile, but never wallows in it. One with her husband in his degradation, though an utter stranger to his joys, how could she pick her way, or take heed *thereto,* when it led through sin's giddy mazes and *darkness?* Oh! it was hard for the girl to have to

wade knee-deep in moral pitch with him on whose arm she hoped to lean trustingly, as they became daily nearer and dearer to each other. Still strong in a sheltering, though mistaken, love, she goes down with him to ward off what of evil she may—a steady prop in his unsteady path, ready on the instant to lead him out of it if there be but a willing mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Criminally Weak Will.

IN total abstinence alone lay Wrax's hope of rescue, and, yielding to Zee's example and entreaty, he signed the pledge with his wife. Happy day! Happy Wrax! How glad he was to have done the right thing at last! and how sweet to Zee to catch "the faintest cooing of returning affection!" Very sufficient were husband and wife to each other then. In the dark days Zee had done her best to keep things straight; but there was no substitute for the master's eye and mind. Now she laughed at care, rolled it on to Wrax's shoulder, in truth, and well he did his part, readjusting all which had gone awry. His moral nature once aroused, his eye and brow soon cleared, his hand and step became firm, and he looked every inch the king of his castle. Solomon in all his glory was totally eclipsed by Wrax, as Zee decked their future in rainbow hues. Hers was too deep a nature to give its all, and cry because she had no more to give; her very giving enriched her, it was so full, so free. Weaknesses, successfully struggled against, bind rather than sever human kind. The struggle dignifies the man, the woman; it should be easy, therefore, reverently to confess faults one to another.

In the sweet peace which followed in the train of abstinence, husband and wife caught a fleeting glance of the happiness the—to them—unknown world of *oneness* has in store for pilgrim feet. But all too soon a growing listlessness in Wrax, indicating a wavering of right principle, constrained Zee to ask of herself: "Will he continue to wear the armor of faithful *service, or has* he sworn eternal fealty to his baser pas*sions?*" The very desperation of their case excused

the energy with which she implored him to be a man, to give no quarter to the foe, crying: "Only persevere, and the future shall be the brighter for the past; yield, and all is lost. What can I do to make you happy in your home? You never can become so steeped in vice as to remain indifferent to those whom you ought to love, without your judgment and conscience disputing your every false word and act. Oh, be steadfast to the end! This is the turning-point. Now, *now* you'll triumph!"

Unfortunately, he would not be persuaded that, in order to abstain, he must manfully shun old haunts and associates. The reader, therefore, will be prepared for the wretched alternative. His criminally weak will succumbed to the love of drink, and Zee was left alone with her bitter disappointment—the more bitter for his having broken his pledged word. He writhed at times under the lashing of conscience, as only a strong, guilty man can. Loud in his professions of unchanging love for his wife, he blessed her again and again for having borne patiently with him, as he craved her forgiveness, sincere as earnest so long as the fit lasted.

Still silly Zee purposed hiding his sins—so great to one reared as she had been—and what an eternal lying that hiding was. She fancied her reticence on the subject, by shielding him from remark, would make his return to home and duty all the easier. Coward souls, both of them; the fear of man, not the love of God, was in their hearts.

In such sad moments the bitterness of death, as concerned her husband, being upon Zee, her forced and hollow laughter made friends look on anxiously. She was, indeed, so far over-acting her part that Merlee told her she had "long feared all was not right." Right? Zee could but shake her head, and gulp down that dreadful rising in the throat which so unmans one.

The truth once admitted, friends made the kindest efforts, verbally and by letter, to check Wrax in his mad career, but it availed not. "Their meddling," as he phrased it, exasperated him beyond all bounds, *and as his fury must* have vent, it fell on his wife—he

dared visit it nowhere else. And "she," he declared, "would never be happy until she had ruined him." He flattered himself that, sheltered by his wife's and his own duplicity, outsiders could not possibly become cognisant of his habits. He forgot that the guilty one is his own tale-bearer, that dumb witnesses confront him at every turn, and so mysteriously trumpet his disgrace that danger is often nighest when security is highest.

As for Zee, she was glad to be censured, however wrongly, if it might but lessen his load of guilt. Wrax was not all bad, and as she retired more and more in upon herself, her patience stretched to meet the demands he made upon it. Her faith, such as it was, had never relaxed its hold on Wrax. She had in some measure reached Paul's eminence when he wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. Zee could perhaps have given her soul in Wrax's stead to save him, but such sacrifice in the sense in which Zee would have offered it is not accepted at our hands, one soul being as precious as another in heaven's sight.

Like a maddened steed, Wrax plunged and kicked against the pricks of conscience, as beer, wine and brandy blood obliterated all trace of manliness in him. He was seldom to be found in his business proper—himself, his all, were drifting away into that awful vortex which engulfs humanity's best and worst. The drink-vulture is satisfied with nothing less than the whole man and all which pertains to him. And Wrax was sinking lower and lower with stolid indifference, until, swelling with a bombast quite farcical but for its pitifulness, he ceased to command or to desire the respect of good men, calling them "sneaking, drivelling idiots." "He never cringed and licked the dust as did other men." No. He scorned, or professed to scorn, the life led by the virtuous and honorable.

Of women, too, he spoke with a contempt acquired, not inbred, imbibed with his beer at the public house, as was all that was base in him. So infamous a school fully explained his ruffianism. "I'll never let a woman talk to me, not I, indeed," he often said; and the louder he ranted, the more completely he fancied he had Zee—

who quailed before brute force, in which he was greatly her superior—in his power.

Never, perhaps, was a baser lie fathered on the credulity of men than that which declared the drunkard to be one of the most generous of his sex. Find an essentially selfish man, and in his selfishness you have all that is necessary to make a good (if it be not a contradiction in terms) drunkard. It is true that all selfish men are not sots, and equally true that among the sots are found men who give because they cannot keep. But to whom do they give—to their wives and hapless children? Indeed, no; but to their boon companions, to be reputed jolly good fellows.

One of Zee's many foolish attempts to call Wrax home was that of sitting up for him, in the hope that he might return just a little the earlier; and for years she hung on his footsteps in that way. Till at length, as midnight stillness crept over all things, her restlessness increased so much that she grew too nervous to sit alone in her pleasant room; so taking care to have all the hinges well oiled lest they should betray her, extinguishing the hall gas, she nightly took her stand at the front door, to watch for his home-coming. If a carriage or a straggler chanced to appear, she fell noiselessly back, and they passed on, leaving her alone with the night and her sorrow.

Come when he would, how he would, she was glad to have him in safe hiding; and so long as she could meet him with a smile Wrax returned it, though with but a shame-faced sort of a grin. But it sometimes happened that, being very tired, she had controlled her feelings until an inward start warned her of his approach, when the sight of him, proving too much for her jaded powers of endurance, to her deep mortification, a deep, half-choked sob, she was powerless longer to restrain, burst forth, making Wrax wild with passion.

It was "temper," all temper, nothing but temper, of course, and Wrax again scrupled not to cast the whole weight of his wrongdoing upon his wife, yet never dared to say, though importuned to do it, in what way the fault was Zee's, or how his sins were hers. Her

heart might be breaking—what of that? It was the wife's duty, "just what he had her for," to meet her husband with smiles, always with smiles, no matter in what condition he might roll home; and to believe her oblivious of his condition, Wrax would rather Zee had gone to bed; hence his greeting was sometimes a cruel taunt at her stupidity in sitting up for him. How irritating he could be! keeping carefully within the pale of the law while he subjected his wife to nameless indignities—converting the law, indeed, into a pair of pincers, wherewith to nip her to pieces, should she refuse to crouch, a slave at his feet.

Sometimes, after having helped her senseless log to bed, she has gone out under the silent sky to quiet her fierce inward surgings. She could not breathe with that loathsome object polluting the air; she must have room to walk about while she, Paul-like, fought with the "beasts" Wrax embodied—anger, malice, high-handed tyranny, and others. Full well she knew that if kind words failed, as fail they did, hard words were not likely to be more effective with Wrax; but flesh and blood, high-spirited woman that she was, could not always brook what she had to endure and keep silence. No, she occasionally retorted on Wrax with a bitterness to which truth added a scathing pungency, withering to a less hardened sinner. Still she could and would have borne it all heroically if good might have resulted; but wherefore this waste of time and strength, this hopeless misery? Ought Wrax, wicked as he was, to be thus almighty? Ought she to be thus entirely at his mercy? Could right ever come out of so much wrong?

Zee was learning hard lessons in a hard school—a school which would sharpen her wits if anything could—and it was well that she should begin to look questioningly on life and life's duties; it proved that she possessed even yet the elements of growth within herself. Never, even in her saddest moments, did she charge the wrong on God. It was of man, all of man; she knew that.

Rex, the sunbeam in the home of the shadow, was welcome everywhere. What a picture he was, aglow

with ruddy health, his beautiful flaxen curls falling on his bare shoulders, his busy feet, hands, and tongue never long silent! When a sturdy little man of three summers, a tiny new brother was shown to him; and, being old enough to give baby something more than a passing thought, his prattle and bewilderment, as he capered about, trying to master the ins and outs of this fresh sprig of humanity, were perfect. Baby was a toy for his especial benefit, and he must have him on the floor all to himself. But, that pleasure being denied him, there was evidently a something over, or under, or round about that baby delightfully incomprehensible.

The dear little black-eyed rogue was his mother's image; nor did she love him the less for the likeness. Very tenderly were the children cared for—they were Zee's all, you know, and she was the important woman when she sent her *two* men out for a walk. The little kindnesses so sweet in moments of weakness were, as far as concerned Wrax, all wanting to Zee. He concluded that a good nurse and servants summed up all needful requirements, although, when gout laid its torturing demands upon himself, he was most exacting in the service he required of his wife. He would, nevertheless, have voted even his children insufferable bores, had the slightest care devolved upon himself.

Those who suffer much need to be made of tough metal to meet the demands made upon them. If Zee could have locked her trouble in her own breast, half the pain would have vanished. It was like probing a mortal wound for those she loved to speak of it; and, fight though she did with it, it still so shut her up within herself that it told upon her. And, to her dismay, she discovered that it had robbed her baby of its proper nourishment, which had been superabundant for the first child; but for the second there was almost none. Her doctor puzzled not a little over such an unusual deviation from the ordinary course of nature. His patient could have told him that the cause lay deeper than his skill could reach—a wounded spirit, not a distempered body, asked healing balm. Delicate from its birth, having to be brought up by hand, baby

never thrived. No food seemed to agree with it; and, being as shamefully ignorant and unfit for so holy a trust as are almost all young mothers, Zee gave her tender plant what he liked best, though, perhaps, the worst thing for him.

So dense is woman's ignorance of all physiological knowledge, the marvel is that an infant ever arrives at maturity. To taboo subjects as "unfeminine," "unbecoming," which may be worth more to her than life itself, while a new-born babe is put into her hands to rear, is the maddest folly. If all knowledge came to woman by nature, if the "little stranger" came in its "monkey"-jacket, prepared to shift for itself, the instinct of cow and calf might suffice. But since it is not so, if life and health are worthy of one moment's consideration, to make women scale Alps of opposition in order to emerge ultimately from her worse (because of our boasted enlightenment) than Cimmerian darkness, will surely merit and receive the condemnation of history. The masculine cry of "indelicacy" raised against woman's study of medicine and of kindred subjects for pathological uses is quite in keeping with the "delicacy" which once required all young wives to wear caps. Feeling certain that her child is being sacrificed to injudicious treatment, her own and her doctor's felt incapacity has wrung many a mother's heart. And yet doctors, even, are jealous of woman trenching on the realms of physiology—a study more important to woman than to man, for man's sake, since no one can know how much stronger, longer-lived, and larger-hearted the entire human family would prove if wisely reared.

God does not "take" the thousands of little ones killed now by mistaken kindness, now by cruel neglect. Nature, shamefully abused as it is in many ways, is infinitely wise and strong, and so tenacious of life are the little ones that many of them refuse to die under the most barbarous treatment. But, since infanticide is not a Christian institution, the lamentable mortality among infants ought to provoke serious inquiry.

And since England does now possess a few educated women, it is to be hoped that our lady doctors will

confer on society a benefit as lasting as the human race by inventing and popularising some simple contrivance which shall support the bust from the shoulders without in the slightest degree compressing the waist.

The praises of the "slender waist," in whose honor many silly women have squeezed themselves out of existence, have been rung to nausea by unreflecting poets. But a better taste having pronounced shrine and victims alike worthless, has exalted nature—symmetry of figure—and consigned wasp-waist monstrosities to the vulgarisms of the dark ages. Man's figure is more symmetrical, therefore more truly graceful, than is woman's of the wasp-waist hideousness. Banish the wasp-waist for ever and for ever.

But to return to Zee, she stupidly persisted in watching for Wrax's home-coming, until all at once, as suddenly as inexplicably, she lost her nervous dread of retiring to rest. Exhausted nature triumphed, and longing for night with child-like weariness, she went to bed and to sleep with the birds almost, for about a fortnight, when her year-old baby fell sick, and wasting visibly, slowly pined away, the poor body telling how fierce had been the struggle for life. And having wished for a girl-baby at his birth, Zee now remembered with sorrow her keen regret at his being "only a boy."

Conscious of having done her best, bad though it was, for the little man, all the hyena in her was stirred to its depths as she listened about midnight for the heavy thud of the father's uneven step as, with flushed cheek, lack-lustre eyes, or eyes aflame with the devilish light the bottle kindles, he came straight from his carousals to the bedside of his dying child. Zee felt she must tell him that he—*he*, by his cruel desertion of herself—had taken the precious God-given life. But, knowing Zee's excited state of mind, although she would have puzzled over the reason for wishing to save him from the truth, so dreadful because it was the truth, Merlee, who shared the sick-room anxieties, implored silence with so distressful a glance, as Wrax presented himself, that Zee averted her face and left Merlee to reply to him.

With increased knowledge, Zee believes the child to have been sacrificed to her own unreasoning ignorance rather than to anything wrong in Wrax, who, though absent from home, was proud to say he had not gone to the public house the night the little man died. What a boast!

Zee was so poverty-stricken in household gods, her heart-strings twined the tighter round her few treasures; and though she could not say "Goodbye" without a very painful wrench, she yet resigned her pretty bud with the feeling, "I wish thee joy, my darling." Better that he be safely housed. What had she to offer beyond her fond encircling arms? Thenceforward the fluttering dove was a blessing in new guise. He just dropped the olive-branch and sped back to his ark of safety, beckoning her thitherward.

The sudden restfulness of spirit was explained now. God had closed the eyes of body and mind preparatory to the trying watch-night service he required of her. And she, whose trust was but partial at best, found comfort in the thought, "God cares for me." She was learning, in passing through the furnace, that all things work together for good only in so far as we turn them to good account—a lesson that created a joyousness within, which never blushed at its own levity. And in such moments of clear shining she pleaded for Wrax as only a wife and mother can. She longed for him to enter life's deeper depths, where passion has no place. He was, indeed, so hidden away in her heart that God could see her only through him, and yet her shallow faith failed to see that, in refusing to be saved *from* his sins, not even God could save him *in* his sins.

After the death of the little one, Zee never again attempted to sit up for Wrax, who sometimes stayed out all night; but she was so slow to let hope die, that she caught at its veriest ravellings, and lived on them as long as possible; and difficult as it was, to a being like her, to know what to do for the best in her untried path, a mistaken sense of duty bade her to sit up for him. But she now deplores the time *and strength* fritted away in waiting on one so uncertain as he. Lie in bed to all hours of the day as he

did, she could not for very shame; so that to sit late and rise early was certain to result in a breakdown sooner or later.

The fact that Wrax was kind to everyone but his wife, and cruel to her just because she was his wife—the creature of his convenience—was the one bitter drop in her cup. He was the last man to have treated a mistress or a servant as he treated Zee; they would not have been at his mercy, nor could they have felt, as did Zee, the gross injustice of placing the husband, by virtue of his sex, at the top of the social ladder, thus stultifying his desire for improvement to his own degradation and his wife's humiliation, yet requiring the wife to be intelligently companionable to her husband, while forbidding her to place her foot on the lowest rung of the ladder of learning proper. It is preposterous!

Himself and his beer were the only things Wrax loved, yet he was as strong as Zee was strong to resist the drink; and in selling himself to the love of drink and the vices thereby engendered, he was without excuse; it was wholly a question of a perverted will—the will to do wrong. Zee could see nothing before her but poverty and disgrace, and that man into the bargain—that man to whom she had given all, sacrificing herself, she fancied, to save him, who despised the treasure by his side, and cried like an idiot for sour grapes. How dare he so to blast her life, and make her feed on gravel and ashes? He, idle fellow that he was, would keep her nose to the grindstone as long as she lived; but what was to be gained by it? She could not bear it. And thinking to take her affairs into her own hands, she floundered in despondency's quagmire till the waves of despair quite hid from view the city of refuge. Oh! it was so hard to have a soul that would not die, try as Wrax did to blot it out!

Zee was passing through these straits, when the public mind was shocked by the trial of Madeline Smith for poisoning her lover, and Zee became possessed of the desire to poison either herself or Wrax. His death she meditated; she must get rid of him *somehow, anyhow.* "The devil," she muttered between

her teeth; "ah, if I could but kill him! To be tied to such as he for life, and receive nothing but insult and injury at his hands, would be worse than death."

Intending, at Zee's solicitation, to make a really elegant ornament, by starting zinc to grow in an air-tight globe of water, Wrax had given to Zee's special care an ounce of sugar of lead. But, though the necessaries for the zinc-growing had been provided, the procrastinating Wrax had failed in his part of the contract; hence, Zee's possession of the poison, over which she hung, deliberating as to how best to administer it with safety to herself. As to how much was necessary to destroy life she had no idea; and ardently though she longed to get rid of Wrax, she never touched the poison until one day, Wrax being present, she snatched it from its repository, her work-table, and giving it to him, said: "Throw it away, or I shall poison you with it." Seeing she was dreadfully in earnest as he gravely scanned her face, whose pallor equalled his own, perhaps, he forbore his wonted sarcasm.

She was not prepared to die for Wrax twice over, and the probable consequences to herself alone prevented the committal of the rash act, Zee fancied. But she did not know herself, nor did she know how different a bad deed appears when evil passions are hounding their victim on to its consummation—to what it looks to the sensitive eye of conscience, when once 'tis done and done for ever. Supposing she could have murdered her husband without suspicion, she would have made a full confession; a guilt-burdened conscience would have made the crime all her own. There was in her none of the cowardice which fathers all wrong on the devil.

Like those who walk dizzy heights, the weary and heavy-laden must live by looking up, or one false step may sink them to irretrievable ruin. The poison-delirium was the densest battle-smoke and din through which Zee had ever passed, and the all-compassionate One turned and looked on guilty, trembling Zee, in pity for her sorrow as much as for her sin. *He knew that* she tried to say: "Thy will be done," *with something* better than parrot-like meaningless-

ness, but she was weak, and could only raise streaming eyes to heaven. Where else could she look? There is agony on which human eyes cannot gaze—agony which becomes at length cords of love, binding the sufferers so close to the heart of the Infinite that their sorrows become the most sacred part of their character, and in reference to outside sympathy they can afford to say: "Tarry ye here." It seems almost profanity to write of it; put off thy shoes, for this is holy ground.

The beneficent Father clearly intended that man's social life should be as full of sunshine as is the world of nature. But is it so? and if not, why not? Simply because selfishness mars all that is good and beautiful in life. There are, nevertheless, drops of honey in the bitterest cup, and one of the most grateful to Zee was the comfort she had in her servants. Her first "Emma" and her "young man" having set sail for love in a cottage all taut and trim, her second Emma, of whom mention is now made, was devoted to her mistress, because being quick to note a willing mind, Zee had, with steady persistency, reduced Emma's blundering hands to order. Kind, faithful creature, how nervously anxious she was to do well her part; Emma acquired a personal interest in her work by acting out the fact that a clean, orderly house is less to the credit of the mistress than of the servant. Emma was seen all through the house, as she brooded with jealous care over its interests; nor was she less neat and nice in her person than in her work, possessing a good stock of clothes, she had likewise a bank-book and a fair sum laid by.

A judiciously kind mistress, being in earnest herself, can make what she will of her servants; whereas, the mistress who has no will of her own, who knows not her own mind, is certain to be tyrannically overbearing, and to treat her dependents as mere machines. Having no money, no might, domestic servants are capable of the most self-denying heroism—kindnesses which, like the dew, refresh and fertilise by stealth. The poorest in this world's goods know best how to *give the "cup of cold* water."

By much unobtrusive tenderness, a silent but effectual way of pouring oil on the seething waters, Emma proved conclusively that she was one with Zee in her sorrow; nor could she remain ignorant of its cause, yet never did she venture a remark beyond: "Don't you feel well, ma'am?" on observing the breakfast untouched, perhaps, or Zee looking unusually sad, for whose lunch, of her own accord, Emma would try to find some choice tit-bit. She lived with Zee for years, and continued in her family until her marriage rather late in life.

Living in dread of the future, Zee assured herself she should be surprised at nothing which might happen; her unfailing though inadequate resources were, nevertheless, alert to ward off evils becoming daily more prominent. Still, it was not too late to retrieve the past, the turning-point in Wrax's history must certainly come; even those who had watched the signs of the hydra-headed monster's progress refused to believe him so lost as to throw to the winds such a home and such a prospect of ease, if not of affluence, as he possessed. Hence, if remarks were bruited abroad, they were held somewhat in abeyance, the surface of things being much brighter in reality than to the reader, who is behind the scenes.

Happiness with Wrax was out of the question, for he was never to be found, or, if found, was pleasant to no one. Zee therefore went her own way, and made her own plans without reference to him; and as he had often of late declared it to be his determination "to go abroad," the Christmas of 1858, the last possibly they would spend in old England, found Zee prepared for an unusually festive season. Wrax always insisted that in "money matters he was as safe as the bank;" and his wife, whatever were her fears, to be consistent with her peace-at-any-price cant, was obliged to act as if all were fair and sound.

But it is not safe to reckon without one's host. Some of Zee's friends, who had arrived by invitation on a lengthened visit, having thawed their half-frozen limbs by their cheery bed-room fire and arranged their private affairs, descended to the dining-room to discuss creature

comforts, and ultimately reclined at ease with a sense of exquisite *abandon*, when their quiet chat was interrupted by a knock at the door, and in answer to "Come in," Emma said: "Please, ma'am, you're wanted." In the hall stood Wrax, to Zee's surprise, and he beckoned her into his office, when, lo! a stranger confronted her. Words died on her lips, but she divined evil as she glanced from one man to the other. Alluding to the stranger, Wrax said with the utmost abruptness, as he carefully closed the office door: "This is a bailiff in possession."

Understanding only too well the significance of those dread words, Zee saw the beginning of the end of a bad career—an end all darkness, which should have been all light—and was as much horror-stricken as if she had never assured herself she was prepared for the worst. She was indignant, too, though that was no time to show it, with Wrax and his want of delicacy in telling her before that man; but his very want of soul made him crouch like a coward when he most needed to be a man. He could not tell her alone. The little courage he had ever possessed had evaporated in beer and tobacco-fumes. Ill-starred Zee was caught in a trap with strangers, comparatively, staying in the house.

"Pay the man and let him go," suggested Zee. "Easier said than done," objected Wrax. "Several things have to be seen to first. The man must stay where he is for the night; I'll get all he wants. No one—not even Emma—must know of his being here, and in the morning I'll make it all right with him, and there'll be an end of it."

Finding that Zee staggered under the blow, Wrax on leaving the office with her made exceedingly light of it. Declaring that there was "not the slightest cause for alarm," he begged her to "put away that scared look and make the best of a bad job." Again, easier said than done. Under that sudden revulsion of feeling a sense of impending ruin occasions, Zee's all but undying energy and hope failed her. Here was an end of the pleasant Christmastide! Its glory had departed. She could never more bury her dead out of her sight.

There was nothing real for her henceforth but pain and shame.

It was well, however, that she had to shake off the hard thoughts which obtruded; they could do no good, and she ere long joined her guests, with blanched cheeks, may be, and a dead-lock on her heart; yet she was such a practised dissembler, she could call up the hollow smile, though roses to the cheeks came not at her bidding. Her friends observed the change, but held their peace.

On Christmas day, the merriest of all the year, Wrax and Zee swelled the number of the family gathering in the old home, whose spacious, oak-wainscoated rooms rung again with good spirits, till the sides of the house must have ached from their reverberations, good spirits and good cheer lasting for days, until husbands and lovers returned to their merchandise perforce. Even then leave-takings cast but a momentary shadow. The beaux had departed, but the belles were forbidden to sit down with solitude in love's vacant chair; or if the cherry-ripe lips quivered, so long as forget-me-not's lingering caress dyed the cheek with peach-bloom at its ripest, the maidens valiantly shook off the wintry chill, and displayed only the bright-red holly-berries of good nature. Heigh oh, for the lads and lasses! it is well they cannot keep all Cupid's secrets to themselves, that others catch glintings of the sly rogue's coming and going; the world would be dun and monotonous without them; they keep a spot of greensward in the hearts of all but the uncanny.

But to pick up the darker thread of the story. For the day after Christmas-day the hapless Zee had issued invitations for the largest dinner-party she had ever presumed to give; and Wrax, who had discharged the bailiff according to promise, implored Zee to allow her arrangements to proceed as designed, solemnly assuring her there was "nought to fear unless she wished to arouse suspicion and ruin him by giving a tale-telling change to her plans." But it was of no use talking, she was unequal to the task; she had grown tired of keeping up appearances; her nerves were unhinged by what had happened, together with what might yet be

looming in the future. Friends residing at a distance arrived as expected, with whom a quiet, enjoyable day was spent. But even then, anxious as he was to keep up appearances, mine host failed to present himself the livelong day.

That first, worst breaking in upon the privacy of home would have been prevented had Zee known Wrax's financial position. She kept his books to the best of her ability, but never dreamed of opening his letters; better that she had; threatening letters, demanding a settlement of accounts, would then have received attention. If curiosity be a feminine weakness it belonged not to Zee; Wrax was the nagging, inquisitive one.

It was the eleventh hour with Wrax, and he was urged to recover lost ground by all that love and reason could dictate; and intending to afford him needful assistance, unless he proved hopelessly involved, his eldest brother, the best friend Zee ever had, requested of Wrax "a clear statement of accounts;" and his wife, in conjunction with other friends, entreated him to submit his affairs to his brother's sound judgment, and to make a fresh start with the new year, socially and commercially. But no; he who trusted no man expected all he said to be taken on trust; and loudly asserting that he was "all right," and "could pay twenty shillings in the pound with any man," Wrax, in his proud defiance, rejected his brother's aid, saying: "If he can't take my word he shan't see my books." Thus, in his dogged obstinacy, he cut his only ladder from beneath his feet.

Events proved that he was right as to his solvency, but it is doubtful whether he, wreck that he was, could have made it clear even to himself; certainly no sane man would have accepted his mere word. Having at least a hundred men in his employ, his own surmises as to his solvency might have been wholly fallacious; since, singularly good though his business was, no master can with impunity leave his interests uncared for to the most competent of servants. The fact was that Wrax, in his abject condition, had lost the will and the power to make crooked things straight, and if too

complicated for his own unravelling, extraneous aid would profit little. Who should care for his interests if he neglected his duty?

The February following that dreary Christmas, a third son saw life under a cloud. Having a mother to shield its blossoming, the nondescript article enveloped in flannel was as well tended as a royal prince—he was all-glorious within, whatever the outer regions might be. Wrax could not bear a sick room, probably never sat down in one, large and well-appointed though Zee's rooms were; but knowing that another wee lump of humanity claimed kinship with him, he took a look at him and went his way. Having grown used to his absence, Zee had ceased to mourn it; he did but multiply idle excuses as fresh duties had to be shirked.

Once upon a time Wrax half jocularly proposed marriage and emigration in a breath to Zee, who negatived the, to her, absurd idea; for was not his fortune already cut out for him, if not made—what could he want more? But had he frankly given her a sufficient reason for such a step, she would cheerfully have waived all personal objections thereto and have gone with him. Zee has reproached herself for having opposed his going, thinking he might have been a better man abroad.

But no, emphatically no, the man is the same in every place, weak at home, weak abroad, else what, where is his moral nature? Unquestionably the bands of wickedness have a fourfold strength, so long as the weakling permits himself to be hemmed in by men as idle and reckless as himself; but bad men, ready to ensnare the willingly ensnared, are found the wide world over. If a man means to break away from human blood-hounds, it must be by an internal, not an external, transmigration—all things must become new within the man.

Wrax's present determination "to go abroad," idle freak though Zee deemed it, appeared to shape itself to his mind, since he recurred to it again and again; but vacillating as he was by habit, he would arrive at no decision in the matter. He talked of India, the last

place for such as he ; but anything was better than the apathy into which he had sunk, and he at length professed to have made application through an M.P. for one of the many lucrative appointments then offering for India, for which he waited, until having grown sick with hope deferred, his wife urged on his consideration the superior claims of one of the colonies.

Zee had possessed a splendid constitution, but it yielded at length ; her baby's advent left her sinking lower and lower until "Excelsior" seemed likely to be the swan's death, not life-song. Being no longer able to fight ghosts, real or imagined, she sighed for a calm haven of inward peace, and welcomed death as the dear friend she would hasten to meet, come when he would, how he would. And he was coming, yes, coming, not as she had hoped, perhaps, to carry her off at a bound, but slowly and softly drawing nearer, so that his footfall was heard by her ear alone, and she watched with ardent longing for the one rude blast which was to shatter the now useless vessel, believing she held tight hold of the robe the deliverer was weaving for her—a light, most beautiful garment because a shroud. She only asked to be left alone to lay her head on the last, sweet pillow, without trouble to anyone. And if tears fell, they were all for the boys she must leave behind.

But there were those in the flesh who objected to her slipping thus stealthily through their fingers, so she was taken for change to the best place possible, the dear old home in the woods. There was the father with all a woman's tenderness ; there, too, the mother, such a right good nurse, and sisters Merlee and Lulu (wives and mothers now), genuine English girls, whose genial humor soon made sunbeams play on Zee's fancy as veritable sunbeams danced on the wall. The saucy sprites resolutely posted themselves between Zee and the blues, and slyly wafted out of sight the cumbrous mantle of sighing and dull care she had in her feebleness wrapt around her. They were her constant companions in the merry spring-time, and entertained her as strength returned with book, or chat, or needle, as they basked in the sun's life-giving rays, anon driving

round the country dear to the invalid, or strolling along shady lanes walled in by steep hedgerows, alive and fragrant with primrose and violet; leisurely extending their perambulations, they daily mounted higher and higher up the gaily-painted, gorse-covered hills, gazing with vivid appreciation on the ever-varying, richly-wooded landscape.

Zee was tranquilly happy; there was health in the very atmosphere of home; loving hearts brought healing balm. She was lifted, as by a spell, out of the cold isolation consequent on Wrax's craving for "life," and dropped into a nest lined throughout with love's priceless floss of exquisite content, a graceful ferny drapery hovering over and about rather than touching the sensitive form of the stricken deer. The very buttercups and daisies made music for her till her heart and her pulse throbbed with renewed vigor. Moved by a common impulse, indeed, Nature and Zee put on a new dress and sported each in her own wild way. To get well was the only work she had now to do, and a teeming fancy made loitering on the road to convalescence very delightful.

Hurrah for the home in the woods! with its charms for eye and mind, its delicacies to tempt the truant appetite—the home which had done so much for Zee. The house, according to tradition, was "haunted"—by the footsteps of angels, Zee declared. Certainly the quaint inscriptions, oak panellings and sly dark corners of the large rambling antiquated place were suggestive of ghosts and goblins, and the stories current lost nothing to Zee's imagination, however often she went over the ground. In health her whole nature was aglow with Eastern effulgence. She lived in Aladdin's fairy palace, and his wonderful lamp illuminated, though it could not remove, the surrounding darkness. Whether she ever sat in the roomy porch of her home with the "headless lady in white" said to pay nocturnal visits to it, or dug for the crock of gold said to be deposited in one or other of its damp cellars, this chronicler wotteth not.

After a few weeks of absence from the home, good in itself but icily cold, which Wrax provided, Zee was *her brave self* again, ready to tread the old rough path

with its roses here and there—briar roses, very sweet, but, oh! so thickly studded with thorns. Still, with restored strength, she would give the more earnest heed to duty, though but imperfectly understood.

Yes, Wrax certainly purposed going abroad, but being loth to break up their home, yet doing nothing to keep it intact, he procrastinated, according to custom, as month followed month at snail's pace. He continued, moreover, so pitifully irritating that Zee required to watch always lest a jarring note should prick him into rebellion. His very irritability proved he was not past feeling, but what his feelings were was left to conjecture, except that "the fates were in league against him. He was a much-abused, greatly-wronged man—the victim of a conspiracy, everyone, even his wife, being bent on making him a beggar," and much to the same purpose. His spite against his own family amounted to insanity; and, undisguised though it was, they never relaxed their efforts to serve him. To his wild invectives against alleged injustice sustained at their hands, Zee listened quietly, unless he required direct confirmation thereof, when, suffer as she might for daring to differ from him, she never scrupled to say that his censure of them was wholly unmerited unless he had some cause of quarrel of which she was ignorant. She knew he was fighting his own shadow—an ugly one, truly. Glorying, too, in the wet sheet of stoical isolation, no stray beams of Zee's superabundant vital force could warm and thaw his fast-ebbing vitality. To drown reflexion he lived in a whirl of dissipation, studiously avoiding a quiet half hour with his wife; yet was he the more wretched of the two, for how could he face an angry world if he trembled before his wife? There was, however, no help for it but just to live a day at a time and trust to what the next would bring forth.

Rex was his mother's loved companion, she was rich in him. He was a rare boy; transparently truthful through and through, he had no idea what a lie could mean. Having a magnificently strong will, he was occasionally rebellious, of course, but a softening mood quickly followed; then came the cry: "Let me say *my little prayer*, mamma," and until it had been

penitently uttered, he never forgave himself. He had gambolled over his five years without an ache of any kind, but the delicate year-old Piri's ever-threatening dissolution culminated just now in congestion of the lungs. And Zee's good doctor (even in the matter of doctors husband and wife were divided—Wrax patronised another medical man when gout laid him low) exhausted his skill for the sufferer's benefit. Knowing, perhaps, of the shadow that darkened the home, and honoring the wife's silent endurance, the doctor never made a merely professional visit, but lingered long, taking a kindly interest in all that interested Zee. He never expressed sympathy, there was no need; his step, his touch, his very presence were a strengthening draught; he had that to offer, which few are rich enough to give—*the wealth of appreciation*—the power at man's command, the spikenard very costly, the cup of cold water, the only true charity; other charity is but quartz at best, not pure gold.

Happily, the little Piri, an aspen leaf for frailty, rallied once more under tender care.

At length, the promised appointment for India arrived, Wrax said, though he did not show it, even to his wife. But appointment or no appointment, acting on her doctor's advice, and choosing between hard work and indolence probably, Zee decided to India she would not go, firmly adhering to her decision for the children's sake, knowing full well that Wrax would never go without her. So, making a virtue of necessity, he subsequently yielded the point, and chose Auckland, New Zealand, for their future home.

But the dilatory Wrax kept them needlessly long in a transition state, notwithstanding that his wife encouraged him to expedite matters, by pleasant anticipations of the future, in which he would escape all untoward influences.

And to tell the truth, the last came too soon. Zee fancied she could surrender all without a pang; but fancy and reality are widely different things. Wrax was absent when the first dismantling of the home,

which should have been the abode of peace and plenty, took place; and Zee readily enough superintended the removal of certain pieces of furniture. But when she turned to look at the too palpable blanks, and heard the grating of the wheels of the wagon, as it moved slowly away with its freight, made sacred to her by her sorrows and her joys, she fell into utter prostration, and rebelled as only a strong, helpless woman can.

It was a bitter experience! She could not bear to look around. Through no fault of her own, whatever were her errors of ignorance, had she been thus stripped of everything; herself, her little ones, thrust forth homeless wanderers; and with what to lean upon—a tower of strength? Nothing, worse than nothing. With outstretched hands and eyes blind with weeping, one long deep groan told all. She might not pass that cup away, but how to raise it to her lips she knew not. If she could have reclaimed Wrax, the sorrow would have been as nothing; but to suffer and see only bad results convinced her that there was something wrong somewhere. What was it?

Observe! Zee's peace-at-any-price mode of dealing with Wrax was only too entirely popular; if she had taken the right, because truthful, way of appealing to his honor and conscience in her persistent refusal to shelter wrong, even in her husband, unreflecting men, unreflecting women would have said she deserved to fail in her efforts to reclaim him.

But through it all, however, she fought well—now standing her ground, now worsted in the fight. Not yet had she given up Wrax. Even then she pleaded for the guilty one. He was more wretched than she, and in pleading for him she unconsciously slaked her thirst at the fount of pure blessedness. Her burden rolled off her heart, and if her face did not shine, her heart made melody, which was better. What Zee would have become without such religion as she had no mortal may know. Such as it was, it was infinitely better than none, because she was fighting for light with just faith enough to believe that God must have a purpose in call-

ing her to suffer. Whatever may have been Zee's credulity, she will believe there is no God at the central helm when those who deny the God-faith and profess to teach how the universe lives, moves, and has its being by virtue of inherent unalterable laws alone, a presiding genius nowhere, will teach men how to wind up their mercantile and domestic interests, so that all things shall work smoothly together with an exquisite adaptation of means to the desired end by laws alone. If laws harmoniously regulate and sustain the universe, there surely ought to be laws of equal potency to regulate man's petty affairs. Perchance there will be when we become spiritualised. Certainly the labor-millennium will have dawned, scientists will have the world at their feet, when they can make all things go like clock-work without effort, especially if they can at the same time teach men how to form a beautifully-rounded, whole-souled character that can afford to give reputation to the winds with superb indifference.

Necessity is law. Yes, necessity is a complex chain of circumstances formed link by link from within, and helps to unfold the mysteries of life to those who look earnestly upon it, but it makes no pies, cakes, boots, coats, boats, houses, etc. Intelligent thought does all this; and to Zee's small mind intelligent thought rules the universe, before which thought she now bows with loving reverence.

It was done. The home, and such a home! was shattered into a thousand fragments, and this first tidal wave of anguish past, Zee settled other matters with composure. But, fooled to the end, she positively anticipated a few happy days under the old roof-tree, whither the family directed their steps on vacating their own home. In her father's house Wrax would never dare to be the ill-conditioned fellow he was elsewhere. Yes, he did dare. Hope of his amendment, unhappily, there was none. "Farewell suppers," and what not, were the proffered excuses for his excesses.

And since Wrax was what he was, as the last days of parting drew nigh the good father, pressing Zee to his breast, wept aloud, saying: "I cannot give you up, my girl. With friends at hand you know not what trouble

is, but as a stranger in a strange land your life will be one long martyrdom." Wrax's own family, too, strongly urged that he should go alone to the far-off land, and make a position for himself before he subjected his family to the discomforts of colonial life. But Zee's brothers and sisters, as willing to sacrifice her as she was to sacrifice herself, said: "Go with him, Zee. If there is a chance for him it is with you, not alone." The die was cast—Zee would go.

But Wrax still continued ill at ease and touchy to peevishness; and although Zee could no longer cloak his sins—*his* sins, not some other person's—as little should she parade them before him. She, therefore, in making one final appeal to all that was best in him, besought him to recover himself, to conquer for all time his wickedly-indulged habits before he set foot on the ship, where he would be surrounded by strangers, to secure whose personal respect should be worth the desired effort. He could conquer, it was wholly a question of will, he knew that, and she pressed him to do it, by all that he was, by all that he might become, for his children's sake, for his honor's sake. And then, putting away all regretful recollection of the past, finding their happiness in each other, they would start afresh under a cloudless sky, laugh at hardships, make them, indeed, stepping stones to honor and usefulness, and thus chain prosperity to their chariot-wheels. Alas, poor Zee! alas, still poorer Wrax!

The other members of both families were doing too well in the old country to desire a new one, and the change contemplated by Wrax and his wife, though admittedly wise in their circumstances, was looked upon as a tremendous undertaking—a something to be admired, not imitated. Hence friends outvied each other in kind consideration for "the outcasts." Nimble fingers had long been busy on the outfit, for as there were no shops on board ship, there must be no stint, and as nothing could be easier than to send superfluities floating down stream, piles on piles of changes were provided, and such stores of good things that the uninitiated might have conjectured that open-house hospitalities for an army were brewing.

After having inspected the ship, Wrax returned to the home-circle quite jubilant, saying he had taken their berths and made satisfactory arrangements for the voyage, etc., and they were to travel "Intermediate." Intermediate! a fine sounding word, belonging to the mid-air vocabulary, and meaning a something a shade below patrician state possibly. Pressed for the definition of the word, which he doubtless hoped to escape, Wrax admitted reluctantly — an admission received with ominous silence—that "intermediate" meant the third class part of the ship. When Wrax left the room Zee followed him out, and told him quietly, but firmly, that she "would not travel in that part of the ship, even though he had taken their berths." Wrax talked a deal of defiant nonsense in his excited way, to which Zee objected not one word, but her decision was unalterable.

It had not occurred to any one that he would choose less than second-cabin fare for his family, or his services in the matter would have been dispensed with. On learning the terms he had made, the ire of his eldest brother was kindled not a little, and supporting Zee's resistance thereto, he proposed to accompany her to town that they might make their own terms, adding, as Wrax doubtless expected his brother would add: "You ought to travel first cabin, but lower than second cabin you shall not go, if I myself have to pay the difference." They accordingly went through the ship, and secured their tiny second-cabin berths with less of disgust than might have been expected.

And on the last day of March, 1859, the emigrants waved adieu from the ship to friends still hovering on their outskirts, whose blessings caused Zee to gulp down, industriously, certain choking sensations. Happily all parties had been kept too excitedly busy to think, much less speak, of the severance of early ties and kindred melting subjects; so leave-takings shall be borne aloft by the secret-carrying bird, and the reader shall start on the voyage with the outward bound.

Zee laughingly said hers was a responsible post, seeing she had five men to take care of—a brother and a cousin of her own, youths of eighteen and nineteen,

having decided to "rough it" with herself, her husband, and her boys. Expecting to pay toll to old Neptune as soon as tumbling about began, Zee, with characteristic energy, prompted Wrax to make their cabin ship-shape with due speed, and on him the task necessarily devolved, for nurse Piri he would not. He hated work, disorder riled him; he had never before been cramped for room, and a peep into their cabin showed it full to the brim, with "enough to sink the ship" he declared, and he threatened to "throw the whole overboard," making Zee quake for her stores more than a little.

The as yet unsolved problem of how to put a cocoanut into a walnut-shell was, said Wrax, "enough to make a saint swear," and since he was no saint, the reader may nod significantly and pass on. Still, appreciating his every move in a right direction, Zee cheered him on, for it was really hard work stowing away all those things so as to be come-at-able; it would nevertheless have been pleasant work had he but kept his temper, but that article was often lost as soon as found when his services were in requisition.

Every one lives in a glass house on board ship, and so long as Zee could do little but recline at such ease as she could command, she too was diverted by her opposite neighbors—a Church of England clergyman, his wife and grown-up family. No stickler for "order" should commit his clay tenement to the loving kindness of the deep until prepared to learn what is meant by "worse misfortunes at sea;" for the sea-king is no respecter of persons; he dashed about the starchiest of parsons and the stiffest of dames as if they had been common people.

Tropical weather agreed with Piri, but the change of food especially was too much for Rex, who failed with his first illness before they reached the line, and was confined to his bed for days in a burning fever. Then the doomed stores proved worth their weight in gold; the sick one lived on the delicacies they afforded. He had a cabin to himself, and a double cabin though it was, the fever and the tropical heat made his thirst consuming, and through the day

his constant cry for "Water" was satisfied; but Wrax was his nurse (not a good one) through the night; he would have nothing to do with Piri, nor suffer any interference with his plans, and was moreover prone to assert that of all the sickness current (gout excepted) "nine-tenths is sham." Hence, through the long night-hours, the poor child's faint gasp for "Water —water—water!" was oftener peremptorily silenced than satisfied. Denied the power to aid, Zee will never forget that cry for "Water—water!"

The change in the little man shocked every one, when he was first carried on the poop, as he began to mend; and a tiny saloon passenger shared her orange with him. How sweet to mother and child was that bit of orange—he had tired of baked apples, etc.; and later in the day, the little girl's papa gave Zee a large orange for the boy, saying it was "his last." A whole orange! think of it! Gold could not have bought it. How happy the gift made both mother and son! carefully divided and placed within his reach, it would serve to quench his thirst through the night. Of the precious orange, Rex had sucked one, perhaps two, divisions, and the remainder was given at bed-time into Wrax's care. And—would you believe it?—it was "stolen"—stolen from the sick boy! Wrax said, and pointed out a burly Englishman as the supposed thief. "Stolen!" Zee said nothing. What could she say? The wretch who could steal it would deny the theft. The dear little fellow—his mother too, perhaps—cried over that orange. However, from the moment he breathed the fresh air under the awning on deck, he began to recover, and the voyage proved as beneficial to him as it usually does to both old and young.

Deeming light and air indispensable, Zee, in her nautical verdancy, chose their cabin close to the main hatch; but too much water down the hatchway soon placed light and air at a discount, and the captain, who was extremely kind to them, gave them a cabin "aft," and Wrax fitted it up conveniently; it was quite a *tip-top affair*, in fact, with room to walk about and *entertain* visitors. But the instant lively Neptune

began his pitching and rolling, they learnt the value of nut-shell dimensions. It is well to be boxed in when dashed about; space does but give force to the blows.

Despite its many drawbacks, life on board ship is very delightful. To all in health, the sea-air gives ravenous appetites; the simplest food is sweet, no one suffers from dyspepsia. The ship itself, with any number of passengers, is wonderfully clean, there is no dust in the air. Tropical sunsets are grand; the great luminary sinks swiftly to rest in such a sea of gold that its mid-day radiance is eclipsed by its "Good-night" glory. Its lustrous setting reflects perchance the magnificence of the children of light, as they kiss him into beauty at the end of his day's work.

Sparse of incident as is sea-life, the most trifling details of the wonders of the deep are hailed as exciting events; and the birds appearing where its monotony presses heavily, the catching and shooting of them offers an outlet for the surplus energy enforced idleness finds difficult to deal with. The birds follow in the wake of the ship, and are caught with the keenest enjoyment by means of baited lines thrown out astern. But it is sad, very sad, to see the fine albatross fall heavily on the water, and float grandly, silently away, with a broken leg or wing; sad, too, to hear the shouts of the men resounding far and wide as bird after bird falls to their small shot. Wanton cruelty!

The sky, new in its wondrous star-lit brilliancy, was eagerly scanned for the first glimpse of the belauded "Southern Cross;" and, beautiful though it is, now that distance no longer enhanced its beauty, it was declared outrivalled by other constellations, which, being more familiar, "the exiles" loved for their home-look. They as yet owned nothing in common with the Britain of the South Pacific.

Water, water everywhere, but never a speck of land. The sceptical Zee was sure they were "just sailing round and *round*, and would presently eat shrimps off *Gravesend.*" Love-sick swains sighed and hoped they

were, if their bliss might be prolonged thereby. Love-making to kill time is such dangerous work that it were well the electric light should make "star-gazing" a vision of the past. A sudden lurch of the ship, which sent husband and wife no one knew where, was less cruel to the lovers. Wrax protested he had "no patience with the young fools." "No one more spoony than yourself, of yore, sir," suggested Zee, with timely satire; at which Wrax jerked himself off with a half shrug, half grin, at his folly or her fun. No man-traps were set by the girls. They were as purely modest as ever English matron reared, and, withal, so winning that, for the moral health of the male creation, one could but wish their like unlimited. Of practical attention Piri received the lion's share, since with him in his arms the star-gazing devotee could venture into closer proximity to his fair enslaver, who, however, until safely housed, made willing service available. How far the useful outweighed the agreeable during the voyage it were impolitic to surmise.

The welcome cry of "Land ahead!" made farewell suppers the topic of the hour. And, in return for unnumbered mercies vouchsafed by the gentler sex, the bachelors' farewell supper was to be "a stunner," and for this supper many tit-bits that made their mouths water were laid half-grudgingly aside from their own short allowance, while of other folk they begged, borrowed, and—no, imagination shall supply the word. "Fast" as were the bachelors, the sea, as a rule, was faster, and mixed various ingredients above-board, instead of leaving nature to do her work; so that their own cooking operations usually resulted in a hodge-podge, "awfully moreish," called sea-pie, a compound of oatmeal, sugar, meat, raisins, mustard, pickles, and what not.

But for the state occasion pretty fingers were pressed into the service, the beaux fluttering round to mar, not mend, operations. Presently the lads and lasses were seated round a board which groaned beneath such delicacies as the season afforded; and the lads, having fasted all day, were longing, as only healthy, sharp-set Englishmen can, for "a good go in." "One of us"

possessing "sea-legs," was deputed to carry an appetising cauldron of soup from the galley. But on board ship there is many a slip 'tween the cup and the lip—the bachelors and the elements were at war; for as "sea-legs" was in the act of placing the savory mess on the table, the jovial sea-king sent him swimming in decidedly more than his share. Hungry men are hungry men the wide world over; and though roars of laughter, sounding hollow on empty stomachs, went round and round, blessings (?) neither few nor mild were held in check.

Although a professedly teetotal ship, liquors, at exorbitant prices, were nevertheless procurable, and on them some of the men had spent their last shilling and pledged the last article on which they could raise one, before they reached port. Wrax had lent money, at a high rate of interest, on a miscellaneous collection of articles which were afterwards redeemed. But for the drink, all but unbroken harmony would have prevailed throughout the voyage. Under its baneful influence some of the silly men figured in unpremeditated fighting matches, and often, after such onslaughts, the captain stopped their supply of grog for a day or so.

Behold the hour and the man! The pilot is greeted with deafening hurrahs by the emigrants strong of arm and of will, longing to have done with their do-nothing listlessness. Slow-going old England is henceforth in the background, and the land of which they have formed great expectations ranks A 1; but of it, with a love of grumbling inexcusable, a dismal tale is told by those who have just boarded the ship. But gathering up their wits, like true Britons, the emigrants walk off with a do-or-die resolve which ultimately proved the croak and croaker alike worthless.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GLAD NEW WORLD.

NEVER surely did a more cloudless sky welcome emigrants to shores more picturesque, though rugged and barren. Early on Saturday morning the anchor was paid out, and Zee hastened on deck to make the acquaintance of the land of her adoption. Accosting her as she stood rapt in admiration, the captain asked: "Well, how do you like it?" She said: "I love it already, it is so pretty and peaceful-looking." Yes, she took it into her heart that day, and longed to make one of its joyous children.

There, in all its unpretending simplicity, lay the slowly-growing city, built on rising ground, dotted with primitive irregularity by neatly painted wooden cots, whose diminutiveness invested them with a friendliness which made the probable occupation of one delightfully inviting. The aspect of everything was foreign, even to its trees and its want of trees, pioneer clearing having swept them almost all away. The "city," by courtesy, was such, perchance, as Noah inhabited before the flood. It certainly had a baptised air about it that struck Zee as new and very young.

Wrax being among the many men who hastened on shore to secure vacant domiciles, Zee asked of herself anxiously: Will he come back a man? He had consorted with the loosest on board; nevertheless, among men almost all of whom were drinkers more or less, Wrax had been sufficiently moderate to have preserved his reputation Zee hoped. He was one of the last to return to the ship, and *not* himself. Zee looked sad, possibly—how could she help it? Still she felt more disposed to excuse his condition than to expostulate; *but he* was so perversely irate as to make a humiliating

exhibition of himself before Zee could get him to his cabin. Once there, however, he snarled aloud without the slightest provocation: "You think you've had many a bitter pill to swallow, but they shall be nothing to what I'll make you swallow yet, my lady." What! will he ill-use her now that she is at his mercy?

When other men drew from their pockets small love-tokens brought from shore, of no intrinsic value, for wife and children, Wrax looked mean by contrast; not an article had he brought for wife or child, it was not his habit to think of others. On shore again early next day, he returned at night in a worse condition, if possible, than on the previous evening; and a heavy bag of sovereigns, that had been taken from him for safety, sovereigns which he had probably drawn the day before, was placed in Zee's hand by a fellow-passenger.

All clouds were, however, dispelled by active preparations for leaving the ship early on the Monday morning, when Zee landed her "five men" safely and well. Never did stranger set foot on foreign soil with a brighter, happier heart than did she—a heart which nothing could long daunt or depress, notwithstanding painful misgivings as to any permanent change for the better in Wrax. If the grim skeleton still followed her, she would beat it down, and yet be a proud and happy wife. With youth and health on her side, what could she not do and dare if peace of mind might but take the place of the old ease of body? Having, indeed, put away all thought of comfort, joy-laden buoyancy kissed her into forgetfulness of the past and into love with the present; she cared not how rough her home, how hard her duties, if Wrax were but a man.

In such a spirit she consecrated their humble dwelling, a quite new three-roomed cottage—papered and painted; rents, 12s. per week! Having been kept in a vice so long, and ruled by a stern: "Do as you're told," Rex rioted in leave to run about and shout, while Piri, a baby still, looked around with a satistion charming to witness. Zee's "five men" and herself made one family, so she had her work to do.

Their first dinner on land was served in English style at an eating-house, but the meat tea taken in their own nest was pre-Adamite in its rude simplicity. A huge case served as table, and lesser cases as seats. Wrax was purveyor-general, and his first marketings were—4lb. loaf, 10d.; fresh butter, 2s. 6d. a lb.; milk, 6d. a quart; mutton chops, loin, 4d. a lb.; groceries, about English prices; fruit and vegetables, very dear, but potatoes excellent in quality. But, oh! those mutton chops (they had forgotten the taste of mutton), toasted on rudely improvised wooden forks, were pronounced unanimously "the best ever eaten."

Meat being cheap and good, it formed the staple article of diet; and eager to be initiated in the mysteries of camp-oven lore and other arts, Zee sat patiently at the feet of experience, fellow-passengers and their friends forming a sufficiently wide visiting-circle for her purpose; and one would laugh in a friendly way at the ingenious contrivances of another, as they laid their heads together, delighted to suggest a remedy in an emergency—make-shifts being the order of the day.

To have her household dependent upon herself, raised Zee pleasantly in her own esteem. She had no bell to ring, no good Emma at her beck henceforth (by the way, Emma had much wished to accompany her mistress to New Zealand, but her friends objected); Zee, therefore, cheerfully whipped up her burden, and found it a light and easy load. A queen might have envied her her active, merry life; she could but sing in her heart from morning till night, as she flitted hither and thither, guided by the bright spirits which hover over and around the earnest-hearted. There are self-made pleasures in every path; to youth, to age, the costly toy is of small value compared to the block of our own carving. Shall we ever see the wisdom of making our wants few, our pleasures simple?

The family soon moved into a cottage, which could be dignified by the name of home—a home in itself, the mirror of cleanliness, pleading in silent eloquence with the estranged one. So deftly Zee's fingers flew

over her work, that she broke the back of her task by dinner-time; and yet, as she had no carpet, she must have clean boards. What work it was, the first going down on her knees to scrub! How could she go all the way down there and scrub the dirty floor? However, the scrubbing had to be done, and she had to do it; and as she never hung long on the horns of a dilemma, she went to work with energy, and as the boards grew white, how prettily grateful they looked!

An uncle of Wrax having made Zee a present of a few pounds at parting, she spent it in furniture, an easy-chair for Wrax being the first article purchased. He had grown accustomed to an easy-chair; so, indeed, had she, but she could do without it, and nothing pleased her better than to see Wrax sitting in his chair; he only did not use it half enough.

A rich glow of inward satisfaction in having accomplished something worth the doing, presiding at her afternoon toilette, made Zee feel beautiful within and without. The luxuriously rich, who toil not, cannot appreciate the pleasure of dressing after a busy morning's work; it was a new, gladsome experience even to Zee, who was then at liberty to take her boys, pretty with the "new pin's" neatness, out for a walk. Strolling but a short distance from home, they were lost to view, amid the rank profusion of the unkempt wilderness. Rex was developing fast and well; and though Piri was two years old before he could walk or talk, he was becoming a sturdy little chap, whose dear face beamed the enjoyment his lips failed to utter, as the three madcaps frolicked in the grass, where not so much as a tale-telling bird was to be seen or heard. They would have been painfully conscious of the absence of birds, but that their pet canary (such a warbler!) had travelled with them; and for him, whose song commanded rapt audiences, they were offered a fabulous price, but gold could not buy him.

Good spirits seemed part and parcel of the climate, which was exhilarating beyond all known elixirs; the very atmosphere, with its merry invisible sprites skipping about, was too joyous to permit the dumps to gain and hold the ascendency in any mind. There never

was a bluer sea, a brighter sky; Nature tried her prentice-hand on all climes, and made this New Zealand North the praise of the whole earth. With her strong sense of duty and so beautiful a world around her, life, for its own sake, must have been unutterably sweet to Zee. Any spot, indeed, that the child-like heart calls home, is heaven; nor need it wait till it drops this mortal coil for heaven's meed of appreciation. The "golden city" is not afar off; its gates are ever open to willing feet. The bridegroom's voice and smile are the flowers, which shed fragrance o'er the trackless Alps of life's chequered experience.

In all the plenitude of good health and appetites, mother and chicks returned to tea—most enjoyable meal if Wrax shared it with them, since they could chat leisurely over scraps of news gleaned through the day. Zee feared she might grow weary of toil as its novelty wore off, but she never did; new every morning were her duties and delights, and rest is as sweet to woman as to man. But for being fully employed her transportation might have become insupportable. The ship had been a good school, weaning her from home-sickness by a healthful counter-irritation. And with a feeling akin to sadness, she watched their late ocean-home sail gracefully out of port; its going severed the last link which bound them to the old world. Mid-winter though it was when they landed, they half regretted not having thrown warm clothing overboard; but successive winters proved warm clothing to be a necessity.

Many of Zee's happiest and most profitable hours were spent over the wash-tub. How unladylike! Yes, and the freedom from the restraints and hateful conventionalities of the old-world life was to her delightful. More musical than the peal of wedding-bells was the flapping of the linen of her own washing, as it bleached in the purer, may be, than Italian sky, and sweeter than the rose as she folded it. She had been charged four shillings per dozen (an imposition by the way) for clothes rough dried, therefore resolved to do the washing herself by degrees. And she declared, moreover, that the sun shone more benignly on her

washing day than on her neighbor's, if it were later in the week than Tuesday. All work is noble, nobly done, and no true woman will shrink from a fair share of labor. Character, the outward expression of more or less of inward refinement, dignifies all labor and makes the cleaning of pots and pans look like fancy work, till inanimate objects become vocal with praise; character is the soul's matins and vesper-hymn, it gives the knack of hiding a blemish by adding a charm which the love of the beautiful instinctively imparts. And character, in demanding consistency of itself, unconsciously demands it of others, and its exactions are just. The sensitive spirit distinguishes between interest and indifference; and coveting Wrax's appreciation, Zee clung to the hope that his home would be sacred to him as to her, since her hands consecrated everything. It would have been so pleasant to have known that kind eyes followed her movements, that one being was sensible of, and the happier for, her care. She ought perhaps to have been above such considerations, but she was not; she had nevertheless to go without kind looks and words too, and no whine told the want.

All too late "the exiles" found that in turning everything save silver and a portion of house-linen into money, on giving up housekeeping, they had made a great mistake. It would have paid well and given a home-look to their snuggery to have brought a carpet with them, and all necessaries easily portable, from the want of which too many become carelessly indifferent to home-comfort. For these, however, our friends had not long to wait; no sooner had the news-spirit announced their arrival than a large case was despatched to them by English hearts and hands, the unpacking of which case was a bright-letter day to Zee and the boys, love having conjectured that toys would be as dear to the wee mannikins at the antipodes as in Britain.

It will scarcely break the thread of the narrative to mention that Zee's brother and cousin, having to make their way in the world, were prepared to go to the root of the matter at once, and entered into a contract

to fell bush, of all things, at so much an acre. Hinting with youthful bravado at what they would do if the wild man of the woods should cross their track, they tossed their caps into the air by way of farewell, as shouldering gun and "swag," a heavy load over corduroy roads, they trudged off to the bush with high hopes.

Their destination reached, they muttered something very like "sold" on seeing what New Zealand bush is, and their heads fell perceptibly. A whare (hut), with earth for its floor, awaited their occupancy; so, after having reinvigorated their spent energies, they rolled themselves in their blankets and snored with imperturbable persistency till day-break. When, the lion being strong within them, they determined to pit it to some purpose against those giant trees, and singling out a forest king, vowed that it should kiss the dust presently. But, possessing more pluck than skill, so hard is the wood puriri that the axe, to their intense disgust, bounded off the tree without so much as cracking its bark. Still they persevered.

An exciting incident signalised their second night in the bush. Darkness reigned around, when a shrill cry of "More pork! more pork" was heard, and feeling certain the Maories were down upon them, the youths sprang to their feet, and each seizing his gun crept stealthily out into the open air. They were on cannibal territory, miles from a human habitation, and the Maories, the aboriginal inhabitants of New Zealand, were none too friendly; of their love of "poaka" (pork), too, the lads had heard, and trembled lest they should be mistaken for pigs. It was too dark to distinguish anything, even their fear-blanched faces, as they listened breathlessly for the dread challenge, come when it would.

And it came — came from the tree-tops! to their inexpressible relief, and the forest re-echoed with their roars of laughter, for they had heard of a harmless bird named "more pork," from its distinct utterance of the word. They did well to be wary, however; they would have been but delicate morsels for the "copper Maori." To roost they went again, and

still speaking of the scare with a lucky-escape exultation. Without hurting the forest much, their camping out afforded them an unbroken round of adventure; but they finally returned to Auckland footsore and weary, wiser though poorer men.

CHAPTER X.

"Too Much the Broke."

THE "noble savages," the early inhabitants of New Zealand, were a curiosity to Zee. When she said: "tenakohi" (how do you do?), to her dark-skinned brother, he strode about with a blanket guiltless of tie or tag, folded lengthways round his brawny shoulders, of which shoulders one chanced occasionally to see more than one wished, notwithstanding that, on the whole, he managed his full-dress toggery very adroitly. And the natives being stealthy in their movements, Zee was often startled to find a grim, hobgoblin face flattened against her window-pane, taking stock of all within. Entering the house without any form of "by your leave," they raked an ember from the fire, and dropping it into their horrid pipes (both sexes smoke), puffed away clouds of dirty tobacco-smoke. Then, but not till then, to business, bartering their wares for old clothing, may be, at which they snapped eagerly, first looking the garment over and over; and if they spied a hole, they would thrust a finger through, with "Too much the broke, too much the broke," and Zee had to run it up. Her conjuring art served its turn at last, for she converted many well-worn shirts, coats, trousers, dresses, etc., into kits of delicious peaches.

Wahine (female) is a guy, dress her how you will. She not infrequently became enamored of the shapely dress which adorned the compressed figure of her white sister; and if an old dress were offered her, she put it on, hoping it might envelope her ample charms, but on finding it too small grunted her protest in unmeasured disdain either against madam's elfin or her own elephantine proportions. A Maori beauty, seeing herself in a glass for the first time, possibly, burst into

a very uncivilised sort of a laugh as she made signs to Zee for brush and comb ; but no, not for all Maoridom would Zee have understood those signs; but to have seen the weird face as reflected in the glass would have moved the risibilities of the gravest.

They regarded it as childish to give, and rarely betrayed the weakness, yet were they importunate beggars. Beating their breasts and making a wry face, they would point to the cupboard saying, with a well-assumed whine : "Too much the hungry, too much the hungry," but brightened wonderfully if kai, kai (food), "very dood," "kapai," were given them. If Zee wished them to go, they became as dense as their primeval forests, or else, shrinking to half their size, they would cry, with a lugubrious expression of countenance : "Too much the cold," or "Too much the rain." But "clear out" or "hook it" from the pakeha (man—foreigner) was magical in effect ; hence their visits were made in his probable absence. They were scrupulously honest, or their liberties would have been abridged. Still, amusing though they were, it was not always pleasant to have them prying round.

They courted and were flattered by the notice of Europeans, and locating near the beach, Zee passed their rookery in taking her boys for sea-bathing. One tent entertained a bridal party, some of whom were at their early morning toilette outside their tent when Zee passed. "The brave" wore a shirt, coat, pants and boots, and the ladies' style was of the flashiest "pure red and bright yallar," predominating over a monster crinoline. The dusky belle must have had her own conceptions of beauty, for she consulted the small glass she held in her hand as complacently as the cream of Belgravia consult their cheval.

Wahine wears her sex's badge of disgrace—she is schooled, as is her fairer sister who ought to know better, in all the arts of coquetry, coaxing, ogling, wheedling, giggling. Will woman ever dare to be true —true in thought, true in word, true in deed, with that perfect truthfulness which makes coquetry impossible ? If it be objected it is natural for woman to please, even to the sacrifice of honor, yes, natural

to uncultured savage nature, but eighteen centuries of Christianity should have produced other results in English women. What human nature is, is seen in the noblest, purest type of man, of woman; elsewhere only savage nature, ever affirming its baser self, not its divine nature, is seen in various degrees of coarseness. To call the life commonly lived human nature is a libel on God and man.

When Maori friend meets friend, they demonstrate affection by "rubbing noses;" the men thus greet each other in public, and appear to enjoy it; wahine never —never at least to the writer's knowledge. Whether she is less affectionate, less demonstrative, or beneath such superlative distinction is unknown. She is not permitted to eat with "the braves," except at a respectful distance. Again extremes meet; by sharing in the good things provided, she triumphs over the grand dames of Belgravia, who are only permitted to see the lions feed at public banquets, etc.

Cannibalism is of the past; civilisation has deteriorated human flesh in the Maori's estimation: "White man too salt." A favorite Maori being offered a choice between roast pork and roast mutton from Wrax's table one day, did not puzzle the carver by saying: "I have no choice," as mock-modest young ladies are prone to do, but answered instantly: "Poaka, sheep no good," politely intimating that "sheep" disagreed with his delicate stomach, whereas his love of "poaka" was excessive; and taking his plate, he seated himself at a respectful distance from the table, using his knife and fork like a Christian, and to as good purpose.

The Maori devil (tipo) is white! the color of his skin is favored probably by the conceit which makes the white man's devil black, that each may repudiate all kindred with his black-white majesty with a show of consistency. If "tipo" is understood to be intimately related to the press, the Maori is less witless than some would make believe. But as there may be farther talk (koreru) about him, he is for the present dismissed.

A striking contrast presents itself in turning from the child of nature to the sophisticated colonist, whose

life appeared so fast, so unlike the old-world jog-trot that Zee longed to creep into a corner and let it pass. But given time to penetrate beneath the surface, Zee found repose. The cautious old colonist locked shop and its cares up in his counting-house, and revelling in his well-earned relaxation, he could be seen of an evening in his pleasant suburban residence as fresh as if accustomed to kill time among soft cushions—more so, indeed; soft cushions enervate and take the edge off all rational enjoyment. The very baby talked and crowed as if it knew that happiness and papa came in together. And in the house-sphere, the wives of such men fully equalled their husbands, though in a different way.

Queenly natures are found in every walk of life—women, so far proof against the vulgarity hard-work and hard-fare are said to engender, that nothing seems to stain or harden even the native delicacy of their hands. Zee was surprised to observe how cheerfully and well the women of the upper circles worked, making poetry of their daily cares, nor dreamed of apologising for being busy. Contempt was the portion of those only who pretended to be above work. When a visitor called, if mamma happened to be engaged, she was represented by a small, grave man or woman, of seven years perhaps, with an entertaining simplicity quite fascinating.

Not that the young folk are of the Goody-Two-Shoes order, by any means; but so much is expected of them, and put upon them, that the old head on young shoulders is not unfrequently seen.

There are quite too many sprigs of over-bearing insolence in the "uppercrust" families, and there is juvenile depravity, alas, poor children! down among the grounds of society. Large families are the rule in this land of the sun, and infants appear to be six weeks' old at birth, giving almost no trouble, as they develop with hot-house rapidity, without its forcing and frailty. A rug is spread in the shade for the short-coated dot, and a step-above baby is set to mind it.

Try how Zee would to make home attractive, Wrax

could not have appeared less willing to have entered it, had it been one of the filthiest of dens, and Zee an old hag ready to tear his hair and talk him to death. The crossing of his own threshold soured him; she had known him turn with a smile from a male friend to hiss darkling speech at her, that scorched her; he was mixing up those "bitter pills" she was to swallow. Loving punctuality, its practice was easy to Zee, but to Wrax the word had no meaning; yet come when he would, all things must be ready on the instant. How she trembled at his step! She ought to have been in possession of the veritable Aladdin's Lamp. She, nevertheless, resolutely cherished secret anticipations of brighter days, nor swerved from her high purpose of bracing him to manly effort.

And those, indeed, were happy days that saw Wrax usefully employed; he did at last give to business such energy as remained to him; and having made a start, it was never so wholly neglected as in England, from whence he had brought letters of introduction to men of position in Auckland. But scorning—wisely if consistently carried out—to owe an obligation to any one, he threw the letters behind the fire. Quite as good treatment as they deserved, doubtless. In point of education and business capacity, Wrax was the equal of the first men in the city, and as able as they to make an honorable position for himself. They might have formed a desirable circle of acquaintance, too; but husband and wife were still as wide apart as right and wrong could make them, and differed in tastes and habits so widely that Zee's friends would have been an aversion to Wrax; besides which his uniformly contemptuous treatment of herself, together with doubt as to the condition in which he might return home, precluded the hope of enjoyment. So she made no friends.

As time rolled on, he spurned all appeals to right principle: "only fools and idiots were concerned about such rot." And except that they knew no want of food, his wife and children were left utterly uncared for; Zee feared lest his little chicks, good children though they were, should be a disturbing

element; but no, the man himself was wrong, and made all else wrong; the old blight still resting on his life, public and private, could never lead to honor and usefulness. The ill-assorted pair were average man and woman; neither the best nor the worst by any means, but it is to be hoped that the Wraxes may never outnumber the Zees. If Wrax had but performed his part as well as Zee, with all her shortcomings, did hers, they would never have crossed England's borderland, but have gone quietly down to the valley, leaving a numerous progeny to carry on their life work.

But now cold, cold was the home. Wrax gave his smiles to the world, and reserved only the frowns for his own hearthstone. Ah, how proud he was of that smile of his, and of his absolute control of every muscle of his face when he purposed to mislead! Resenting the slightest allusion to his habits, he flung defiance at his wife in the loudest and coarsest manner. Reproaching her with tiresome iteration as the cause of his wrong-doing, he has flung her Bible (to which alone he owed his leave to live) on the fire, calling her "a damned hypocrite," careful though she was to parade neither faith nor Bible before him, vowing, too, as he never tired of doing, that "he would leave them altogether, and that they should never hear of him again." Zee tried the harder, under a bondage of fear and torment, to do her best, but with no better results. She had long ceased her pretensions to the angelic, and failing by her own unaided efforts to discover in what way she had disappointed Wrax, she implored him in his best moments to tell her, but in vain; so she asked of herself, with an agony of intensity words fail to convey: Am I wrong just where I think myself most right? Still she dared not accept Wrax's definition of right, although she lived in the hourly expectation of his putting his oft-repeated threat of "leaving them" into execution. He could not blame her in his heart, whatever his lips might utter.

His wife ought to have been made to order, no ready-made article ever would have suited him. Such noble women as the late Mrs. J. S. Mill and the Baroness

Beaconsfield are said to have been, would not have been worth two pins to Wrax as wives. It is believed he would have murdered Zee had she thwarted and irritated him as some wives do thwart and irritate their really good husbands; there was guilt enough on his conscience without that. Of one woman and another who fell short of his standard of wife in perfection, he has said: "If she were my wife I'd kick her out of doors," and he would have been as good as his word. Nothing, however, could have been farther from Wrax's mind than an implied compliment to Zee. If she had revelled in such frightful excesses as did her lord, would he have endured it, think you? It would not have been "un-English" to have locked her up. It is passing strange that the proposition to treat drunkenness as a criminal offence should have to combat deep-rooted prejudices. "Lock a man up for getting drunk! it's un-English!" exclaim men, excitedly. Alas, that it should be so! English to turn a man into something less than a brute: "un-English" to turn him back into a man. English to lock up the scum of the earth for getting drunk; but they are paupers whom nobody owns.

Zee was low enough on the social ladder to realise fully that, as a rule, woman is looked upon and treated as the merest drudge—a necessary evil, possessing no recognised power in the household when deficient in that force of character which rises superior to the servility of legal bondage. A long-suffering woman is a phænomenon men cannot understand; they like to contemplate her, so she is impaled on the horns of society's altar, a pretty spectacle for men to gape at. And even admitting that her innate purity is never more divine than when she is down in the depths with her besotted husband, the world is surfeited with such pretty spectacles. Nevertheless her right to consideration will be disavowed so long as it is believed that her social degradation is her moral elevation, that her finer qualities can ripen only in her humiliation, that the lower she lies the more lustrous are her virtues. How fares man's moral nature? Meanwhile, were the tables of stone given to women only? *Possessing*

remedial elements within themselves, the circumstances that are the whetstone of many virtues must sound the death-knell of many vices. Much needless torture of body and mind is endured by women for Christ's sake, they fancy; but he has taught that no wrong which can be righted, come whence it may, is to be tamely submitted to.

Bloody steps will mark woman's way to freedom. Come when it may, as come it must, she'll walk over corduroy roads formed by the drink-tyrant's victims. Think of the scenes our police and criminal courts present—think of the poor battered women—wives and mothers "too much the broke," pleading for their embruted husbands: "Forgive them, they know not what they do," "they might have been worse." My God, what must this world look like to thee, when it looks so black to me? black with a devilishness all of man, not of devil. Will nothing move good men to pity? Must God's garden still be sown thick with broken hearts before trees of righteousness will grow in it? Yes, if men are devils. All power is in their hands, and they love themselves, love the drink, and are not one-half so faithful to their convictions as bad men are to theirs, or the world would not be what it is. The devils in hell must stand aghast at the cruelty of the drunkard, to whom the intelligence of the man and much social distinction are added to the fiendishness of the fiend. Never until the veil is taken off all hearts will it be known how much the world owes to woman, how much of evil she has concealed with ill-judged clemency and disastrous consequences—concealment precious at any price to cowardly conventionalism.

When Christ fainted under his cross, Simon was permitted to carry it. Woman is fainting under a too heavy cross; is there no Simon anywhere to carry it for her? Christ had the power to lay down his life and to take it up again; woman has power to do neither, yet her Judas-husband is allowed to betray her, now with a kiss, now with a kick, until it becomes doubtful whether there is one drop of human blood in his veins, or in the veins of those

who look on with callous indifference. Could infinite love have borne with a *drunken* Judas—so foul a blot?

So filthy is the drunkard that man would not lodge him with his horses and dogs: no, not even with his pigs; yet, grateful only if he does not kick and curse her, his wife must take him in and wash him from head to foot like an infant, or he will roll as he is into his bed, and—oh, dreadful thought!—his wife's bed also. It is too much to bear! If men are men, not devils, suffering's hallowed shrine will have its votaries as well as its victims—victims eloquent in their very helplessness.

With a lofty brow, immaculate England has flung her flag in the face of all nations, seeking to convict them of their sins, while she hugs to her bosom the belief that she is less guilty than are other nations; no one has a stone to cast at her. She says of herself, in many ways: "The white-robed lily is not more chaste than am I. I am guileless and innocent as the sportive lamb. My flag is spotless, *it* never floats over a slave." Strange that no one has dared to give England the lie; to fling back the taunt, Physician heal thyself!

England owns no slaves? The drunkard's wife and little ones are the slaves, legally, of the vilest slaveholder that ever owned human cattle, or disgraced his kind. They are his, body and soul; there is no limit to his power, so long as he spares life—bare life. If he could sell them, they would escape much of his brutality, possibly, lest their money value should be endangered thereby.

Never did a blacker Legree disgrace American soil than nestles in the bosom of saintly England, gold-crazed England! What cares she, though her best and bravest daughters, the pride of her own land, the admiration of other lands, be slain in cold blood? What cares she for the speechless agony of the helpless ever ringing in God's ears? What can be said that will make her look at home at her own sins? It is all for gold—gold, sweet gold!—and heedless of the death-throes of her children, she shows them

a face like a flint, though she knows her gold-dust will one day prove lighter than vanity. Be as saintly as she may, slave-blood is on her snow-drift skirts, and in a demoralised people she reaps the reward of her hypocrisy.

Believing that the drink brings only gold to her coffers, she holds out the fatal glass as she cries: "List not to the babblers who talk of shrieks and groans; but for these bacchanalian scenes, an Englishman's right to do as he likes would be imperilled. Here's the Bible for the other world (we think a deal of the Bible), and here's the glass to drown dull care in this world. Take your fill of both; but the more you drink the better it pays. See the gold—see the gold!"

CHAPTER XI.

"HARDY NERVES."

POSSESSING the spirit of ten women, Zee lived a strangely joyous inner-life, notwithstanding there was rather much of grit in her daily bread. By a subtle intuitive alchemy all her own, she extracted honey from thorns as well as from flowers. When true to herself, hers was no powder-and-point-at-the-jam kind of faith, which proclaims the brightness of earth to be a delusion, and heaven—the jam—to be quite out of reach. Her soul thrived by appropriating to itself just what it most needed: pity her needs were so small. Her very sportiveness was the effervescence of a living faith, which burned with a clear, almost unwavering light, deep down out of sight—light the clearer and the dearer for her sorrow. Not for a mess of pottage could she sell her birthright to the skies.

Rich within one is rich before all the world; neither thorny pillow nor flinty rock can silence the music of the heart—it just lives there. The present life is so sweet, so real, that all its paths, rightly trodden, are paved with gold—gold which sends Fortunatus' purse to the ceiling like a feather as compared with more enduring riches. Verily, gladness of heart is a helpful fairy; making a virtue of necessity, it converts the home of sadness into a palace, it would not exchange for Victoria's own with its responsibilities; it unravels life's tangled web, unsews the puckered seam of destiny, oils all the joints of the harness, so that the wheels of duty run smoothly save for occasional breaks. It environs its possessor with a gallery of living pictures, draped in rainbow-tinted magnificence, as he flits at will over the known world, laying claim

to as much of its broad surface and star-spangled heavens as can any millionaire. Memory's eylet-holes are filled in with choicest fancy-work.

Can the reader be tempted to loiter one little hour with Zee and the boys? Rex was growing useful; and Piri, though long "a careful comfort," had become a sturdy little four-year-old, full of roguish sayings and doings. He one day ran gleefully to his mother, exhibiting a three-cornered rent in his coat, saying: "I took up a piece of tin, and it boke my fock." A clever exploit somehow; he was clearly innocent of any intention of breaking his frock, and while discriminating between mischief wilful and accidental, it is well that children should learn the lessons the latter convey.

Just as he looked for himself behind the glass, so did he look behind the picture for the embodiment of what his mother saw in it, to whom, with everything in the form of a picture, he would run with: "Read me this, mamma." One picture, in which a dog was making off with an old man's dinner, fired Piri's indignation; and fully believing he was doing the old man service, he clapped his hands down on the dog, and looking excitedly in his mother's face, cried: "Now the poor old man will catch him (the dog); won't he, mamma?"

On one memorable occasion, he ran to Zee, with the tears rolling down his cheeks, and wringing his hands frantically, screamed: "My Rex is over the cliff—my Rex is over the cliff," and, sobbing wildly, the child flew back whence he came. Following him, sick with apprehension, Zee signed to a neighbor that she needed his assistance. The distance was but short; and there, indeed, was Rex over the cliff, his head and and hands alone visible, as he clutched and hung by the tough twigs above him—to let go was certain death, and his white despairing face showed he was faint from extreme tension. A gleam of hope flushed his cheek when he saw his mother, whose heartache choked her for an instant; but rallying, she encouraged him to hold on, without hinting at danger lest he should become appalled by looking beneath

him. Obtaining a rope, in which he made a running-noose, the kind neighbor succeeded at length in throwing it over Rex's head; and into the noose he slipped, first one arm, then the other (awful moments those of adjusting the rope!); then trusting to those who held it, the lad scrambled back to the world he had well nigh left for ever, and Zee caught him in her arms, dead yet alive again.

Full of bounding life, the strong young colt, preferring the risk of a breakneck scamper to the grassy mead's enclosure, was over the cliff before he well knew where he was. Seeing his danger, Piri was beside himself, and it was some seconds before he could be made to understand that his brother would be killed unless he, Piri, ran to tell his mother of Rex's danger. Then the poor child ceased jumping about, and flew to Zee as has been seen. Proposing to take Wrax to the spot, to show him how imminent had been the lad's peril, Zee met only an impatient rebuff in: "What's the use? I don't want to see the place."

Piri knew no personal fear, nor did any domestic animal know fear of him; he could be often seen with a pet chicken tucked under his arm. "Jack," an odd man of Wrax's, was ordered to kill a pet duck, over whose fate Rex wept bitterly, refusing to taste it when served at table; Piri, on the contrary, treated its death as a matter of course. Having decapitated the duck, "Jack" asked: "Shall I cut your head off, Piri?" "If you like," replied young fearless. Whereupon Jack made a parade of sharpening the knife, which he flourished in a blood-thirsty manner, as if it were fun to behead little boys; then showing Piri the sharp edge of the knife, Jack took him in his arms as if to operate upon him. Holding him over the spot where the duck's blood had been newly spilled, not a muscle of the child's face moved, not a sound escaped him till Jack demanded: "Are you ready?" "Yes," returned Piri. Jack then set him on his feet, saying: "Well, I'm blest! that beats all!"

Moved with the multitude by a common sorrow for *the loss of* many brave men who went down in the

ill-fated "Orpheus," wrecked on the Manukan bar, the 7th February, 1863, Zee took her boys to the funeral of the commodore of the "Orpheus," whose remains being recovered, were buried with military honors, of course. Observing volley after volley fired into the air, Piri was frightened and, stopping both his ears, he begged to be taken home, and asked: "Why did the soldiers want to shoot God?"

At another time, having listened to the, at his own request, oft-told story of his brother's death, for whom he yearned with a strange yearning, Piri exclaimed: "It was not kind of God to take away my little brother; I'll make a stair up to heaven and bring him down." "How could he be my brother if he died before I was born?" and "How shall I know him to be my brother when I die and go to heaven?" were questions over which he pondered long and anxiously, wishing often, under a sense of weariness and love of change, to "die and go to heaven." It was he who paid Zee the neatest of compliments, by asking with a troubled brow: "Mamma, are your eyes new ones?" Eyes preternaturally bright with over-much weeping, possibly. Ah! of him a thousand bright flashes of thought might be told, proving his brain to have been sufficiently active.

Zee loved her boys too well to pet and spoil them, but she entered on a left-handed, because unaided, task in training them, not by so much as a word of counsel would Wrax assist therein; but if the chicks ran foul of his gouty toes they knew it, soon learning to take their cue from his smile or frown and act accordingly. Hiding his sins from his children as far as possible, their mother exacted of them child-like reverence for their father, for whom the very excuses she made, though she knew it not, were his severest condemnation. Goodness is its own defence, but wrong-doing needs a thousand meretricious props, not one of which ought to be afforded. Wrax's acts of familiarity were so rare that the boys were delighted when he deigned to romp with them; but he was invariably "three sheets in the wind" at such times and so violent in his play that it usually ended in one or

both of the boys being hurt; she was therefore thankful when he just left them alone.

Possessing no clearly-defined principles of action for her own guidance, Zee was painfully conscious of her inability to guide another. Watching the nesting-bird feathering its nest, as it skilfully interweaved tiny bits of moss and down, and anon taught its fledglings to soar, she felt that for its work the bird possessed a more fitting intelligence than she did for hers.

Notwithstanding her time-serving, *to be* rather than to *seem* was the one law of Zee's nature; she could therefore but reproduce herself in her children. Happily she had good stuff to deal with; there was no "total depravity" in the lads, though each was blessed with a strong will, the training of which was their work, not hers. God having fashioned each child for its own independent walk in life as perfectly as the rarest flower he ever formed, the child must learn to stand alone mentally, from the instant an answering smile irradiates the countenance. Zee began her training in the cradle, into which Rex was placed after his morning and evening bath; and if he chose to cry, he had to cry himself to sleep, soon learning that he gained nothing by crying. The younger boys were too delicate for such treatment.

The teacher and the taught developed together, since Zee could take but one step at a time, conscientiously giving of her best, and taking freely of theirs in return. True happiness springs from within; she must, therefore, above all things make them a law to themselves—sufficient in themselves for all their needs, in order to guard them against the abnormal craving for excitement their father manifested. If they were refractory, her severest punishment was to require the delinquent to undress and go to bed for a shorter or longer period; the rest was beneficial, and time and silence worked wonders. Besides being sent to bed, Rex on one occasion was threatened with some farther punishment in the morning; but Zee's unwonted severity wronged his sense of justice, and *looking* sorrowfully into his mother's face, he said: "*Why,* mamma, will you punish me to-night and in

the morning too?" Zee saw she had made a mistake, and told him so; she was conscious of no loss of dignity in confessing an error of judgment to her boy.

Repression is as needless as hurtful to the child who has learnt from the cradle that he is only a unit, a little bit of a great whole; and that he may know himself well enough to reverence the nature given him, the parent must dive to the depth of the child's being, by a healthy introspection which proves the reasonableness of so educating the tender conscience and strengthening childlike truthfulness, that he may be able to choose between good and evil. Only by reverencing the God in human nature can such a loving appreciation of the God-like be instilled as shall enable the child to realise that his is not a foreign yoke, that "the way he should go" is a beautiful "way," given to himself alone to tread. And if the child who is guided by the love that casteth out fear be less of a prig than the child constrained to a blind obedience, he will make a truer man, because in being thrown on his own dignity and self-respect, self-control will grow with his growth unconsciously. It is vain to bind the body to rules if the will is truant.

The ways of a household are wonderfully simplified if yea means yea, and nay means nay; children must be able to respect their parents' word if they are to respect their own. Faith in the rod marks an incompetent teacher; all correction possessing a reforming tendency must appeal to the conscience of a reasonable and responsible being: the mere thought of a big man or woman beating a poor little child is in itself brutalising. Oh, think of the good stuff running to waste in the girls and boys on all sides, because character and how to form it is less studied and understood than is the rearing of pigs and plants. And of this lamentable ignorance the secret is that the teacher must be brave ere he can inspire courage, must be gentle ere he can instil courtesy, must be truth-loving and truth-living ere he can make absolute truthfulness attractive; in fact, what the teacher *is* is of more importance than what he can impart.

Christ is the ideal of all that is nobly brave, gently

considerate, and true with a directness that carries conviction to the core of falsehood; but few men love the ideal half as well as they love the miserable little ill-tempered self that is ever dragging them down into the mire of the debasing selfishness which so curses human life, that it were more fitting to put on "weeds" for the living than the dead, so dead are the many to everything worth living for.

Truth, like its Author, is unchangeable, but different aspects of truth need to be presented to men in their progressive stages of intelligence. In the boorish age the club and hard words were the only arguments used; it then perhaps became necessary to make a sensitive regard for the feelings of others the be all and end all of existence; and this has been done so successfully that men and women have become a mere bundle of "feelings" without a vestige of backbone. "Feelings" have been elevated into a God, and the most unprincipled of men defer to this vice of "feelings" with speech soft and smooth to nausea, until honest utterances are dubbed "impertinence," "dogmatism," etc. Seeing what men and women have become through the undue prominence given to "feelings," if Professor Huxley has based his plea for "hardy nerves" on the fact that true manliness is godliness, he has struck the keynote of the truest, most divine gospel preached since Christ was upon earth.

Take another look at the divine ideal, and you will find that the infinite repose Christ's character affords is its transparent truthfulness, based on the truest, most reforming love. Penetrating to the inner and outer vices of character and of life he could not, would not speak less kindly of a person than to that person; and *such is the truth the world needs*—a seventh heaven almost known on earth. Reflect on the probing directness of his criticism of the woman of Samaria, for instance, and judge of the cost to oneself of a similar faithfulness in dealing with known open sins when "feelings" only are left to work upon. Real goodness is an oppressive force intolerable to hypocrisy; truth and falsehood are necessarily antagonistic; Christ's very separateness from sinners was his con-

demnation. He knew bitter herbs to be excellent medicine; and even while he sorrowed to think that his words must provoke fierce hostility, he yet left them to rankle in men's hearts until all things, ever so little askew, looked ugly. Love requires the scalpel to do its work, to rip open plausibility's cloak, that all wrong may stand revealed. To the penitent only does the knife become a blossoming almond-rod dripping with myrrh.

Not for the kind things he said and did, not as a "soothsayer" was Christ crucified; no, but because he was a "troubler" of the people—the people who "gnashed upon him with their teeth" because his scathing personalities made them keenly realise that they were the "hypocrites," "vipers," "whited walls," etc., he said they were. No wonder his brethren hated him; his every word and deed, his very presence, were a reproach to them. The religion of Jesus quickens our sensibilities, intensifies our very humanity, and we never approach Christ's characteristic mode of putting truth needing severity until we, too, make bad men and women "gnash upon us with their teeth." But to do this successfully, we must be divinely good in a higher sense than obtains. But sad to say, "feelings" demanding the tenderest consideration, have been deferred to, until professional etiquette has so frowned down personalities that the most forcible truths, the matchless sermon on the mount and similar, preached as generalities, fail to move men. It is the intrepid, reforming spirit that kindles love and hate. And if Christ were now upon earth, he would be found "in the midst" of our many political, commercial, and religious "dens of thieves," and "dens" of legalised infamy, making black arts look so black that bad men who exalt the passions would, if it were possible, crucify him ten thousand times over. And had woman been trained to put her thoughts before men, it would be to her anguish unbearable to know that her pure, innocent children must be born into, and be corrupted by, a world full almost of preventible sin and misery, yet that professional eti-

quette, notwithstanding Christ's example to the contrary, required her so to refine away the truth, as to leave nothing but what men *like* to hear, however ill it might fare with the truth.

It is far more important to develop the child's moral than intellectual nature; the latter unfolds naturally by the endless questionings life supplies, as food to the mind. But teach him to live down self, to think out his true life, with reverent concern for each being and all things connected therewith; then send him into the world where vice rides rampant, and men everywhere strive to secure the goodwill, not the good, of their fellows; and what will the pure young mind think of the consistency of those who profess Christianity?

On one subject Zee's strong will ruled to some purpose; Wrax failed to provide properly for the children he had; she therefore wisely determined there should be no more of their children for other people to keep. So long as the world required to be populated, it was perhaps well to teach that fate ruled in the matter of families; but now that population runs riot, the animal passions must be kept well under control, and parents must limit their families to the number of children to whom they can do full justice. Believing, under protest, that she was fated to have as many children as God sent, Zee's mother, a delicate woman, was subjected to a slow martyrdom of twenty years. An amount of mock modesty highly reprehensible hangs about the population question, but it will disappear when the question is fairly met: To how many children can I do full justice?

The population question having once come up for discussion, it will never again be frowned down, taboo it as you may; it were dangerous to attempt to silence it; intelligent women are not to be put down as silly women have been; they must be faithful to their convictions. And upon this subject their convictions are so strong, so deeply rooted, that if large families are necessary to the prosperity of the State, you must un*educate* woman, rob her of the little intelligence she *possesses*—make her, if you can, wholly animal; since,

except where the maternal instinct is above the average, she will not bear in the future what she has borne in the past. She will not! To talk to her of "taking what God sends" is profanity, until some reverent thought is exercised in bringing children into the world, and woman is trained and educated to wisely discharge the maternal functions. Man would never be persuaded that he was fated to have, say, from a dozen to five-and-twenty children, if paternity meant to him what it means to woman.

Zee's mother loved her husband, and he deserved to be loved; but she never could forgive him the suffering her seventeen children had occasioned her; she felt instinctively that she had been cruelly wronged in being made to suffer so much for the selfish gratification of another. Her sufferings embittered every moment of her existence (her decease is recent); and it is certain that had her husband been less kind, she would have committed sucide to escape her long martyrdom. She has said, in all simplicity, with tears: "I never would have had so many children if I had known what I know now"—that the passions should be kept well under control.

It is inhuman, brutish to frequently subject a woman to the martyrdom of maternity; the suffering it entails, if nothing else, should limit the size of the family; besides which, when children crowd upon each other, the mother's health is not sufficiently established to give to each child the robust constitution it has a right to demand. Then, again, there are tens of thousands of men who look upon children as a "nuisance," and bitterly reproach the mother for their existence, no matter what the cost of maternity may have been to her. "Get the brats out of my sight before I come home!" is the frequent cry in many households. A working woman with a large family needs an exceedingly kind husband to make life endurable.

Thanks to the Bradlaugh-Besant prosecution, Zee now rejoices in the conviction that never again in the history of Christendom will any woman be known to *endure the long* martyrdom suffered by her mother

from a family of seventeen children; and if she had the wisdom and strength of any number of men, she would gladly throw them at the feet of the above peerless man and woman. The world needs such fearless leaders, and such leaders need the support of earnest-hearted men and women willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with them in their determination to put down all wrong in such a manner as shall constrain men to exclaim: "Is not this the Christ?" Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant are strong —there is no real strength apart from absolute goodness—their every word and deed, judged by the noble stand they made on the above question, prove them to be strong in the all-conquering force of righteous convictions bound to override unreasoning opposition. Loyal to truth and right, with that rare courage which counts life and reputation cheap for the sake of the good that they may do, they possess a religion of a most genuine kind; where there is intelligent earnestness in one's every act, there must be a better religion than such as spends itself in preaching and praying merely. And though under the ban of public opinion, the eyes of the thinking world are fixed upon them with great expectations. Christ will be "lifted up" by them in all his reforming might, as he has been before in our national history, and they will make men do Christ's work, whether they like it or not. By the time men have obtained their intellectual majority, "infidel" will have become, it is believed, the honored name of all that is holiest, purest and best in human life.

It is too bad that women should suffer as they often do in bringing children into the world, and that men should show such utter disregard of life as the liquor traffic and the Contagious Diseases Acts evidence. O, glaring inconsistency!—large families are a necessity and "prostitution is a necessity"—man is to be made wholly animal! Those infamous Acts sap the very foundation of the home, of the affections, of the *entire* domestic economy; and what is England without her homes? England with virtue dishonored,

vice regnant—England, the home and fatherland of the Bible—a guilty England! Violate the sanctity of the domestic circle, make woman the creature of man's convenience, not at all entitled to his consideration, and where is the prosperity of the State —where? Men should have thought of what they were doing when they framed such legislation; the day is coming when they themselves and their names will be overwhelmed in deserved execration. No wrong in the universe is a "necessity," except as discipline. To have licensed the drink traffic is bad enough, but to license the most degrading, undisguised profligacy, is an outrage on common decency, that good men ought to resist to the death. Thank heaven, men are better than their laws, or earth were a pandemonium indeed!

Verily, the vices rampant to-day, whose conquest is impossible to the coward only, are not an enigmatical, mushroom growth; they are the legitimate outcome of this practical infidelity to all things pure and good existing in high quarters, professing and profane. Let the powers that be but license any one kind of infamy, and the unreflecting, who swarm on all hands, and live only in the passing hour, will, of course, do their utmost to license every kind of infamy with, to their minds, sufficient warrant. But, forgetting all distinctions of sect and caste, once let good men and women, however, combine their forces, and they will soon become what they ought to be, but are not, a terror to evil-doers.

CHAPTER XII.

"BITTER PILLS."

TO draw blood from a stone, *i.e.*, money from a miserly husband and father, resolves itself into a state of chronic bankruptcy so trying to the wife that she really ought to share in the money-getting. That they would "have but one purse" was a strong point with Wrax on his marriage; and he took care that the "one purse" should be all his own, and so excessive was his love of money that the connubial lot with him would not be all honey under favorable circumstances. Contracting no debts, Wrax knew how every farthing of housekeeping money was spent; he nevertheless doled it out five shillings at a time, nor offered a penny till Zee asked for it, then complained, often complained surlily: "You're always asking for money." The deeper shame to himself that she was; he knew she might be trusted with untold gold. It was well that wife and children were indifferent to dainties; Wrax grudged naught for himself, his tastes must be studied. The little Piri would look wistfully at his father's steaming bowl of bread and milk for breakfast, and Zee hoped Wrax would give the child a little, or give herself an extra sixpence that the boys might have a treat, but he never did. Such meanness filled Zee with intense disgust. Why, it would have choked her father to have required him, in sickness, to gobble up the rarest dainties, even on the plea: "They will do you good."

Fortunately for Zee, relatives from time to time kindly forwarded to her some of their half-worn-out clothing for herself and the boys. Wrax's "blood" was consequently rarely drawn for apparel; but a change of seasons necessitating other changes, he gave

Zee a sovereign wherewith to make the desired purchases, and on her return from town positively asked her for "the change," notwithstanding that she had told him the sovereign was not half enough to buy what was needed. Knowing full well that Zee scorned to procure a favor by artful aids, Wrax still repulsed her every caressing word or deed with: "Oh, you want a new dress, do you? then you won't get it!" Zee want a new dress—faugh!

It is delightful to have to chronicle one surprisingly generous act on Wrax's part. The boys unwittingly fell in with a subtle companion, distressingly obtrusive, though wholly unworthy of entertainment, viz., whooping-cough. And to dislodge the enemy, Wrax permitted mother and children to spend three weeks of Rex's summer vacation in the country. A most happy Christmas it proved, although they neither saw nor heard from Wrax until he summoned them home, whither they returned much benefited by the change.

On the occasion of a purse being presented to her minister, the daring Zee's temerity culminated in her accepting a cunningly-planned I O U for £2, payable at two months. The deferred payment quite caught Zee, and she determined, by working early and late, to earn the amount in knitting, crochet and embroidery. But, sad to tell, pay-day was forthcoming and the money was not, and pride refused to accept defeat; but pride failed to keep her from doing a mean thing. She had repeatedly made the £2 a matter of prayer, but prayer offered no solution of the difficulty, as, indeed, how should it? the spirit of true prayer would have saved her from being caught in such a trap, by giving her the courage to refuse when solicited to give, since she knew that Wrax considered her entitled to nothing beyond necessary food.

The last day of grace had arrived and Zee was at her wits' end about the money, the utmost extra work she had accomplished amounting to a mere trifle. She had had ample proof that in a certain stage of intoxication Wrax could be flattered into or out of almost anything by those disposed to take advantage of his weakness. And *Zee, for the* first and last time in her life, seized

upon such a moment to gain her ends. As the devil would have it, Wrax returned to tea that evening "three sheets in the wind," and in such a jovial mood that Zee told him with trepidation what she had done, and asked what she should do.

"Do?" returned Wrax, with gushing generosity, "pay the money," and he threw two sovereigns towards her. Zee doubted her senses, and her whole soul recoiled from the coins obtained in such a manner; they almost blistered her fingers when she touched them, and yet her pride was gratified in having them to give. Had Wrax been himself he would have refused the money point-blank in all probability. The deacons of that little church out-devilled the devil in their deferred payment scheme. Religion is not served by such tricks, it is dishonored.

In telling of what Wrax became through the love of drink, the reader will see that Zee's unfaithfulness helped to drag him down as much as did the drink. She should have lived to have secured his good rather than his goodwill; but the latter was grateful to self-love, the former demanded self-crucifixion, and Zee kept back part of the price. Those who live truly must be a means of discipline to those who do not; there is no choice in the matter.

Unfaithful though she was, she was yet the spring of whatever good there was in Wrax; she could prompt him to a kindly deed if mortal could. In truth he could be base, act basely, better out of her sight than in it; and had she been faithful to her God she might have cheated him out of himself, if not into heaven, into a holier life; but a do-evil-that-good-may-come religion never could have influenced Wrax, it must be the genuine article. In mental dust and ashes Zee has learnt precious truths, and all too late mourns the neglect of her God-given powers, sacrificed on the altar of false teaching. She is "found wanting," and though she cannot excuse herself, it were almost to be wished, knowing what her teachers were, that some excuse could be offered for her; but right for right's sake forbids it, she should have used her brains.

Her minister was just a parrot, nothing more. His mind had become stereotyped by his having adopted certain dogmas early in life which, without variation, he parroted forth, year in year out. With her spiritual instincts keenly alive she has gone to the so-called house of God, eagerly scanning the preacher's face to see what of divine impulse it reflected, as she begged with a soul-hunger impossible to express for one, just one crumb of the bread of life to teach her how to live day by day, through all the jibes and sneers by which Wrax tried to undermine such faith (credulity he called it) as she possessed. But she got husks cut and dried, nothing but husks; she had better have been content with her God and her Bible in her closet.

The circumstances of the preacher's life made Zee's needs incomprehensible to him; he recognised the needs of the polemic soul, but of no other; the creed-bound man was ever impotently wrestling with an imaginary foe, and enforcing unconditional submission to man's will on woman. He was content if the thoughtless said of him: "Isn't he a dear man?" "Isn't he nice?" and of his sermons that they were "acceptable," "comforting," "delicious," according to taste, so that his moralising generalities flattered rather than condemned the vanity and conceit of men. Possibly as Zee listened to her parrot, could she have put her thoughts into words, she would have said: "For pity's sake, man, hold your peace, and let me speak from bitter experience. Swallow-like, you skim truth's surface, and catch a fly here and there on which your own soul starves, as you dish up your unsavoury meat with herbs too flat even to be bitter. Know you not that sheep worried by dogs, in human form, cannot live on the bleak mountain's brow, they must be led to the green pastures beside still waters? You have never dug for hid treasure with half the enthusiasm with which men tear out the bowels of the earth to possess themselves of its hoards; but if you would be about your Master's business you must delve no less persistently in this world's vineyard than in the Gospel-mine, where each has treasures as inexhaustable as are their source, in either of which nuggets of

fine gold are found only at great cost and by those whose feet are in the right path."

Zee had now reached the least anxious period of her colonial experience; there was a man at the helm of affairs, and she was happy. Wrax had taken a working-partner into his business relationships, which lay so wide as to necessitate his spending the summer in the country, whither, to their delight, he removed his family, who loved the country well. And as it was over-run with Imperial troops, in consequence of the native war then raging, they resolved to furnish their sparse house accommodation with barest necessaries, picnic fashion.

Oh, exquisite relief to Zee! no more fruitless business anxieties, but the rest and quiet of trees and fields. In the country, she found kind friends. She carried an introduction to one family living in a grand house, reposing picturesquely in its ample grounds, whose possessors were crowned with well-earned laurels, in the earning of which the lady of the house bore a prominent part; and she would have contested the point with some spirit, had her husband presumed to speak of their joint property as "mine"—it was "ours," as the possessions of man and wife ought to be. The imposing dignity of the mansion somewhat scared Zee, but chancing to cross its mistress's path, the name of their mutual friend proved an opening to pleasant intercourse. For the lady promptly called on Zee, who, in alluding to the narrow limits of her picnic sorceries, was made to feel that her make-shifts were infinitesimal exceedingly, by her guest exclaiming: "Why, you have a palace to what we had when we first settled here!" Her path of roses now had been rugged in the past, and the fine old dame was justly proud of the useful figure she had cut; and pulling both together with might and main, her lively description of her own and husband's efforts to make both ends meet, within doors and without, evidenced a degree of good sense that ought to be appreciated.

With the conservatism of ignorance, English-born *colonial* youth zealously resist all invasion of their

supposed rights, as sons of the soil, by determinedly beating off intruders. Hence, being a stranger to the country youth, Rex, a peculiarly sensitive lad, found to his disgust that for some days, go which road he would to school, the boys barred his way in a provoking manner. Recounting his trials at night and the threats held out for the next day, Piri (that boy was born to fight the Goliaths of the nineteenth century), in allusion to the threats, panted and swelled with defiance as he exclaimed: "Let them! let them! I wouldn't mind!"

The small hero was his mother's sage, philosopher, and friend, and being too young to go to school, his artlessness and keen sense of the ridiculous kept him bubbling over with a merriment most grateful to her in her many (but for him) sad and lonely hours. Filled with admiration at the oft-recounted exploits of a certain "spring-heeled Jack," the terror of Zee's neighborhood in her youthful days, Piri suggested: "If we had but spring-heels, mamma," as, in strolling along a road bounded on either side by a high hawthorn hedge, they met "a mob" of some 200 wild cattle; and though by no means frightened on her own account, Zee would have shown the "white feather" for the boy's sake if the leaping of a stile or a stone wall would have placed the rough-looking herd at a safe distance; but as the "spring-heels" were not forthcoming, Zee enjoined silence on Piri as she hid him under her cloak, then passed slowly through the dread phalanx. Hugging the hedge on the opposite side of the road, the cattle eyed Zee askance with vicious eyes, as if a woman were a new revelation to them. On nearing the men following on horseback, they exclaimed with one accord: "You've got some pluck, upon my word, Miss!" The indomitable Zee looked up in surprise, ignorant of the fact that the cattle had just been driven in off the run, and were consequently "dangerous."

In his leisure hours, Rex had to don his coarse apron and clean knives, boots, etc., work which, according to conventionalism, would not have been required of a boy occupying the position his father ought to have

secured to him; but that did not disturb either the boy or his mother; he would be none the worse, and might be all the better for doing it. The Anglican clergyman, calling one Saturday morning, caught Rex at his work in full trim, and encouraged the lad by saying: "That's right, my boy, work away! I often have such work to do." The good man, blessed with eighteen children, was passing rich at the rate of forty pounds a year. Poverty, obtrusive visitor that it is, often peeped in at his window.

All too soon the charming picnic came to an end, and the family returned to town to find there was not an empty house; the red-coats swarmed in the town even more than in the country. They naturally turned to their own cottage with a sense of proprietorship, but it was tenanted by a lady and her little boy, who were, however, on the eve of starting for San Francisco, and therefore kindly gave up two of their rooms to Wrax and his family, by whom they were gratefully appropriated.

The lady, Mrs. H., fell in love with Piri at first sight, and they soon became such friends that she offered, at his request, to buy him for a penny. He desired above all things to be a sailor, hence his fancy was captivated by the prospect of going in the ship with her and her son, of Piri's age, and promising "never to come back to his mother any more," he begged her to sell him for the penny, and she readily accepted the terms offered. On giving her the penny he danced and sung "I'm sold! I'm sold! I'm sold!" with the liveliest satisfaction. Mamma had no longer any right or title to him; he was Mrs. H.'s boy, and she must put him in his bath, and sharing the bed of his new brother, they discussed their future together with regal independence, until their disjointed syllablings proved that drowsiness was creeping on apace.

Silence reigned around, until Piri burst into a fit of piteous weeping, screaming: "Mamma, mamma, mamma." Zee purposely hung back, and Mrs. H. went to him, which served but to increase his terror; he would neither look at her nor allow her to touch him as he stood on the bed the incarnation of misery

Zee entering the room on his distress becoming unbearable, he flew with a great bound into his mother's arms, and, clinging round her neck, almost choked her, as he cried between his sobs: "Oh, take me back, take me back, take me back, mamma, mamma, mamma!" He was almost convulsed with terror, indeed, lest Mrs. H. should refuse to give him up; nor could he be pacified until she took back the penny she had given for him, and his mother faithfully promised "never to sell him any more." He then went tremblingly to his own bed, holding tightly by his mother's hand as she gently soothed him to rest, and his broken sobs told to the night-watch around his pillow how great his grief had been.

After nearly two years of comparative quietude, the hapless Zee is to be thrown back on the old adamantine rock. When his best energies were most in request, Wrax was so often found lying about "drunk and incapable" that, scandalised by such conduct, his partner, seeing there was no chance for either so long as they remained together, resolved on a dissolution of partnership. Whatever the cost to herself, Zee could but commend his judgment; but Wrax's fury at the proposed dissolution was ungovernable; he knew better than did his wife that the drink was its sole cause; but now, as ever in his difficulties, his wife was his evil genius plotting his ruin, and he reproached her with cruel injustice. And though to the world he continued smooth and oily in the extreme, in his home he was fearfully excited and inhumanly severe, even to his boys, who checked each other with: "Here's papa!" on hearing his voice or step. His wife, to whom he never addressed a civil word, thankful only if he did not scold, trembled when he left his home (the word to him had lost its significance), and trembled when he returned to it.

At length his violent temper reached its climax, and he bolted. Entering the house at midnight, he ordered Zee to get up out of bed and fold the blankets from off it, together with his wearing apparel, which he flung to her from his drawers, saying: "I'm going away for *good.*" "*Where?*" "Never you mind where; I'll

take precious good care I never come back again." And he strapped up his bundle and dashed out of the house without so much as a look at his boys.

He had gone at last, and Zee let him go without a word, hoping he would never, *never* return. He had left her without a penny, and her desolation appeared complete as she dropped by Rex's bed-side; he was awakened by her half-smothered anguish, and folding his arms around her, wept in mute sympathy. Prepared for the worst, she succeeded in calming herself and the child, then went quietly back to bed to watch for the morning. And behold! the dawn and the runaway Wrax appeared together. Why he had gone or whither, or why he had returned, he never told, nor did Zee ask. It was one of the "bitter pills" she was to swallow.

"Pills" especially "bitter" just then, since pecuniary matters were at their worst, which perhaps explained, though it could not excuse Wrax's excessive acerbity. Being of a litigious nature, he had been a fortune to lawyers, both in the old country and in the new; for he wanted both ends of a stick worth possessing, and quarrelled if he met a brother-man who claimed one end of the said stick. To collect and discharge the debts of the firm recently dissolved devolved on Wrax; and in consequence of some legal quibble in the settling of accounts, he was unable to meet the demands of his hungry creditors as promptly as could have been wished. His love of money and the legerdemain he exercised to keep possession of it (hard nail that he was) often looked to his wife like a want of principle; still he had no wish to evade just debts, but only the disagreeables consequent thereon. And in this critical state of affairs, with a view to business partly, Wrax left his creditors and their eternal dunning to his wife with his blessing, as he hurried off to a long distance from home.

Left alone with such a burden, Zee found that she had known only the shallows of wifely tribulation hitherto; now she was to wade in waters which *deepened* as she advanced; yet could she not retrace *one step*, or if her feet touched land 'twas but a narrow

strip 'twixt two unbounded seas of debt and shame, living by the skin of her teeth meanwhile. *That* was no great hardship. It was the debt, debt, debt and the secret—it was the secret that she tried so perseveringly to hide which crushed her; the former would yield to time and patience, but there was no rubbing off of shame's score so long as Wrax was what he was.

Acting on her own discretion in reference to the dunning creditors, Zee would have told each man the honest truth, viz., that they would certainly be paid in full if they would but have patience. But having developed into a stupid Griselda type of woman, she obeyed Wrax implicitly, and was kept alternately on the tenter-hooks of hope and despair by making promises as he directed, which he failed to keep, thus needlessly exasperating his creditors and adding tenfold to her misery.

Not to have saved her reason could she have spoken of her wrongs except to those as familiar with them as herself; Wrax was bent on hiding his sin, and she would still help him. Help him! the mountebanks they both were in their futile attempts to hide a vice eloquent in its very shamelessness. Its brand is on the coward brow, the lying lips, the tottering step, the palsied hand. Who can paint half its hideousness? Who can dare to tell the half of what it makes of a man? Help him to hide it! Zee might as well have tried to hide the noonday sun by holding up her hand, as hope to delude anyone as to what were her husband's habits.

She felt this, too, in a dim sort of a way, and dreading lest her broken promises should constrain the angry men to hold her skeleton up to view, she answered each peremptory knock at the door with a gasp that made her look like a white-livered thief and liar, as she glanced at the men with furtive, feverish eagerness, believing—so entirely, to her excited sensibilities, did the skeleton fill her world of vision—that she saw its shadow in the impatient creditor's clouded brow, or indignant jerk of the body, and almost heard its fateful echo on the lip. But it came not, they *were kind to her.* For them to have said to her that

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Day and night those dreadful scenes and yells grated on Zee's nerves, painfully sensitive because out of tune. The horrors were upon her, and do what she would she failed to dispel the notion that she too would go to swell the dismal howlings of the demented. For a season sleep rarely closed her eyes, she was distracted. And as to what would become of those worse than fatherless boys of hers, now that she felt herself to be in danger of "going dark," as she phrased it, filled her with a thousand anxieties. Would Wrax deliver them up to English friends, or would they be allowed to become city Arabs? A not unnatural question, acute as were the mother's then discordant sensibilities.

Wrax had returned to his house, and so great was Zee's unrest, one night, that she was constrained to disturb his snoring to tell him she "was certain she should go out of her mind." But she met with a rebuff so insolently full of cold unconcern that she would never again in her senses have appealed to his sympathy. His brutality was precisely the counter-irritation her case at the moment needed; it made her think less of herself than of him. It brought vividly before her mind the morning when she, for the first time in her life, asked Wrax to "rise and make her a cup of tea." Ill or well, how could she have asked it? She ought to have known him better. He growled out: "Rex can do it." Another "bitter pill." She choked back rebellious tears, and raising her aching head from the pillow, left the big, strong fellow lying there, wholly undisturbed by compunctions of conscience.

And yet how she had nursed him through his attacks of gout, day and night for weeks together, till she almost dropped from exhaustion! Remembering she was a woman, not an angel (God would have made women angels, and given them wings, but that he knew that they are better fitted as they are for the life that is), those who know what gout is, and can imagine a man so selfishly exacting as Wrax, will understand that there must have been a deal of grit between the joints

and marrow of her constitution, since it was never oiled by kindness. His wife had looked him through and through for some sign that he was flesh and blood, not iron ; but she never found it. Of course, there was a better and a worse in his treatment of her, or it would have been insupportable. He had nevertheless become selfish to the core of his being. In his softer moods Zee had tried to win from him just one kind word in response to some special act of devotion on her part. But "just what I had you for" was all he muttered. Ah, there was a world of truth in the reply. The sort of "love" that seeks only a servant cheap and good in a wife is no compliment, merits no gratitude. Wrax, moreover, continually outraged his wife's sense of right and justice, by pitting her legal bondage against his freedom, before their children too, saying : "Umph ! Who are you ? You've got no voice ; you are nobody. I bought you ; you are only part of my goods and chattels." Most disgraceful truth, humiliating because true. The truth, and the truth only, wounds.

Despite her Griselda-like proclivities, her high spirit ill brooked the indignities he heaped upon her by virtue of his "goods-and-chattel" creed. She was his property now, and he despised himself and Zee, in that he should once have been ever so little her slave, pounding her in memory's mortar for the distrust of himself which had made him feed on the apples of discord, instead of the love apples of his choice. By subtle insinuations peculiarly his own he made her feel—as he in effect snapped his fingers in her face, expressive of the exquisite enjoyment her torture gave him—that she was to pay, with interest and compound interest, the pain she had innocently—the fault being all his own—caused him in courting days. He would have his pound of flesh if nothing else. All men save Wrax will exonerate Zee of cruel designs ; however capricious, she was too tender-hearted to inflict pain wantonly. Well, strength had been given her to do what she had done, to bear what she had borne, and what that doing and bearing implied the drunkard's wife alone can understand—it *may not* be put into words.

But an end came to this long night of weeping. Out-

standing debts had at last been cancelled in full. And though far gone in drink, Wrax went home, one Saturday afternoon, very wretched, very repentant, and said to Zee: "If you'll go down town with me I'll sign the pledge." Ah, happy words! Of course she would go. But being as he was, she suggested: "Wait till to-morrow." "No," objected Wrax, despairingly, "don't put off till to-morrow—I may not feel inclined to sign to-morrow." But that the end in view made a man of Wrax, Zee certainly would have felt ashamed to have gone out with him in his then condition; but waiting only for the friendly twilight, down town they went, boys and all, the latter being fully able to enter into the joyousness of the occasion. By way of encouragement Zee added her own signature to that of Wrax, although she, of course, had never broken her first pledge. Here, again, was an oasis in the desert to the hotly-pursued, broken-winged bird; things would right themselves, as if by magic, now that Wrax was himself again.

To some extent Zee's all of good and ill were dependent on Wrax's habits, and her monthly letter home, simply written, now in her gladdest moments, now with her heart's blood, clearly told, as much from her gayer as her sadder history, that the burden laid upon her was greater than she could bear. And her dear friend, Wrax's eldest brother, seeing no sufficient reason why she should be sacrificed for naught, wishing to ease her of a part, at least, of her heavy load, proposed that she should be invited to take the children to England to be educated, himself bearing the greater part of the expense incurred, in which Zee's father gladly shared, warmly supporting the daring proposition.

And letters from both families, assuming that the above suggestion would meet her approval, were received by Zee, urging her return home by the first ship leaving the port, informing her, moreover, that the passage-money for herself and her children was already paid, and an agent appointed to make all necessary arrangements for her. Never, even in her darkest hours, had Zee anticipated salvation except through Wrax, although he had confessed he "once thought she

had gone from her home with the express purpose of drowning herself and her children." An alarming thought to some men, perhaps, but it is doubtful whether Wrax would have moved an inch to have prevented such a catastrophe, had it been premeditated. A guilty conscience scared the man—not Zee. And to say that she was quite taken aback by what looked like a covert attempt to separate her from Wrax fails to express the intense pain and disgust with which she laid the letters aside on first reading them.

His pledge, of less than two months' standing, was to be sought among the many broken vows which littered his wayward course; and although he had kept within bounds as yet, it was only a question of time. To taste intoxicants was to succumb, sooner or later. But for this fact, her strong sense of duty would have forbidden Zee to entertain the tempting offer from home. It was hard to give him up, even in thought. Not that she had much restraining influence; she believed, nevertheless, that he would be even worse, wanting her ceaseless supervision. With his altered habits and circumstances, the fear of insanity had faded from her mind. She had been able to cope with her difficulties hitherto, and was still able to do so. How could she desert her post?

Allow Wrax to see the letters, or tell him their purport, she could not. What should she do? The boys and their future prospects hung on her decision. How could she best secure their interests, which were so entirely bound up in herself that, if her life failed, all failed as far as they were concerned? Oh, how she dreaded lest she should make a false move, either in going to England or in staying with Wrax!

Having overcome the first shock the letters occasioned, Zee found herself almost unconsciously debating the pros and cons of the question; and that Wrax might share the responsibility of the decision to be arrived at, she at length simply stated the facts of the case before putting the letters into his hand. Taken as much by surprise as his wife had been, Wrax was gravely silent for some minutes, then said: "It's a strange proposition to make." No more, no less. To elicit his opinion

Zee again and again reverted to the subject as the days wore on, but he had evidently determined not to commit himself either one way or the other. Believing it to be her duty to remain with Wrax, but being unwilling that the boys should lose the many advantages thus generously offered them, she proposed they should be sent to England in the charge of a trustworthy woman anxious to return thither. A proposition Wrax negatived absolutely, assigning no reason for so doing.

Zee plied the needle dexterously, whether the voyage should or should not become an accomplished fact, for Wrax's every word and deed indirectly favored their going. The saving to himself of their board, etc., would be his first consideration. He, nevertheless, fully realised the advantage of being able to say: "I neither helped nor hindered their going." At length, however, notwithstanding that Zee would rather have left the matter to the agent's care, Wrax volunteered to make the necessary arrangements for the voyage, and she dared not thwart him lest at the last moment he should frustrate her intention of leaving by the ship now on the point of sailing; but up to the day before it sailed the ever-dilatory man had done nothing but quarrel with the agent. Zee consequently went herself to the agent, and having settled matters satisfactorily, herself and the boys were on the boat by ten o'clock next morning, and set sail for old England within an hour therefrom.

A newly-married couple, glad to accept Wrax as a lodger, entered upon the tenancy of their cottage, furnished precisely as Zee had vacated it; hence his domestic comfort was secured. But the doubt his vacillation occasioned as to whether his family would or would not go by that ship made their last few hours on land needlessly busy and exciting. Wrax, however, with much parade, heartily forwarded Zee's every movement, and not only went with them to the ship, but remained to the last moment. Again she entreated him to redeem the past for his honor's sake, and with promises many and exceeding fair, he vowed he "would be a good boy, make money, and have a fine new house ready for her against her return." Taking plenty of

bottled stout from the ship to sustain them during their half-hour's row ashore, Wrax and his comrade in tastes departed; and as the last stroke of their oars faded away in the distance, Zee turned to her boys and welcomed the prospect of rest—sweet rest. The millstone of thankless toil rolled off her heart, and she breathed freely, the first time for five years. Of the few friends who questioned the propriety of her leaving her husband "all alone," Zee asked: "Have I given you reason to doubt my judgment in the past?" "No." "Then trust me for the present, and for the future."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LILY.

BEING saloon passengers, an hour's fixing found Zee in apple-pie order; and, delighted with the ship, the boys were full of the long voyage before them, until seized by a qualm of the sea-green ghastliness which humbles the loftiest head. Sitting dejectedly in their cabin, Rex said: "I wish I had gone back with papa." "So do I," faintly gasped Piri. So ludicrously doleful was the picture they presented, that Zee could but laugh at them, though not one whit braver than they. Still she encouraged them to bear the sickness like men; "good times are coming."

The rolling of the vessel, bringing the great waters close to him, terrified the erstwhile fearless Piri, who cried and clung to his mother, saying: "We shall go overboard—I'm sure we shall go overboard." Vain were all attempts to convince him to the contrary; so he preferred to remain in the saloon until he became used to the motion of the vessel, and finding that it did not land them "overboard," he ventured again on the poop; but timid still, his mother's knee was his vantage-ground, which so scandalised the captain, that he cried: "Fie, for shame! put that big boy down Missis. You'll make a fool of him." Hiding his face, the "big boy" clung only the tighter to his mother, who begged: "Give him time to become used to the changed order of locomotion, and you'll find he is no coward." And fear having given place to confidence, Piri became bolder than his brother; the little rogue was as mettlesome as a monkey, but his tricks were merry only, not cunning or spiteful. Wrax predicted that Piri would be "a great man on board ship." He was *A 1 with old* and young. By common consent

the children voted him to fill the captain's chair at meals, nor was another permitted to occupy the seat of honour. His personality, though pronounced, was too unconscious to provoke jealousy.

Forgiving him his earlier timidity, the captain used to say of Piri: "There never was but one other such child." Piri was everywhere in demand, his childish simplicity made him pleasantly entertaining. The children dined at reasonable hours, but the captain always had pudding or tart for Piri at the late dinner, which he shared instantly, of his own accord, with the other children. Giving him some greengage tart one day, the captain said: "Now, you eat it; don't give it away." Putting the plate in the accustomed spot with a disappointed air, Piri tried to hide it from the little folk, expecting to have a good time as usual; what he said is not known, but quickly divining the state of the case, Zee exclaimed: "You've spoilt the fun; the boy can't eat his tart." So calling Piri to him the captain asked: "How is it you don't eat your tart?" Silence. "Can't you eat it without giving the others some?" "No." "Off, then, and divide." Away he bounded, and away went the tart, as far as it would go. Standing on the poop, with his hand locked in that of his mother, and looking dreamily out over the water with those soulful eyes of his, having so strange a depth of meaning in them, that one saw only his eyes when one looked at him, Piri, one day, said musingly: "I should not mind being drowned, mamma; I should soon die and go to heaven." Tightening her grip of his hand, Zee looked wonderingly into his face; but the remark had been quite natural; the saucy rogue often displayed wool-gathering propensities, and nothing could have suited the restless spirit better than to have had one foot on earth and one in heaven. It was even so; he was like heaven, and heaven was like him. Heaven is where God is; God is here, earth is heaven. A strange remark, too, remembering his dread of the water; nothing whatever had led up to it; possibly he was repeating the words of a sailor, an *authority* with Piri.

He must pass into the unknown realm of sleep with

"lots and lots of kisses" on his lips, and "one kiss more," and he put out his hand for the "good-night" clasp, adding: "Tuck me up tight, tight, mamma." The repetition of an act of thoughtlessness against which he had been warned, brought upon him a scold one night, when he said, with a quick pout: "I won't love you." "All right," returned Zee, and not another word passed, until tucking-up time came, when the small man broke down, and the childlike tenderness of the sweet face beamed forgiveness full and free, as he claimed the "lots and lots of kisses," and the unfailing "one kiss more." His was an affection that grew with his growth. Estrangement presses hard upon innocent childhood; the heart is sore broken, though the lips are still sealed. Ah, why require our pets to *say* they are sorry? Can we not see it and run to meet them?

To the child who is lived, not talked into goodness, our holy religion will be as attractive as are the flowers in May; so trustful is the child, a felt divinity casts a halo around him, until man's rude handling brushes off the bloom. And that same trustfulness, together with a fertile imagination, enabled Piri to see all things as his mother painted them, and his small mind realised a glorious immortality awaiting little travellers Zionward: Death was to Zee too loved a friend to be represented in chilling aspect.

Many circumstances conspired to set him upon high; his sixth birthday came round, and was celebrated with much jubilation. Several of the gentlemen gave him a copper or two, or a sixpence; the captain gave him a whole shilling! Never was he half so rich before, and, to crown it all, Rex gave him his purse, and in it he deposited his wealth. Next thing, if you please, he ordered "a tin of sardines and a bottle of beer." It was so "like a man" to call for "a bottle of beer;" he heard it all day long; and he would do or suffer almost anything to be "a man." The sardines, for which he insisted on paying "like a man," were soon placed before him and his friends; not the beer, he would have disliked it, his taste was natural.

But better than all the money was the captain's

promise that he "would have a sailor's suit made for him (Piri) by the sailors, as soon as the fine weather came." "Pockets and all?" exclaimed Piri. "Yes, ever so many." Oh, ecstacy! "Be a sailor before I am a man!" Honor out-running his wildest dreams, and the merry cricket danced his merriest. The sailors, in truth, were no less eager than himself to see him "full-rigged," and in anticipation of that best of all suits, the boy often asked: "Is it fine weather yet?"

Having reached the latitude where icebergs sport at will, believing that travellers and wonders should meet, Zee expressed a wish to be presented in due form to the stately masses. To which the captain objected, with thunder gathering on his brow: "If you once find yourself among them, you'll never want to see another as long as you live." By the way, the captain was given to seaman-like explosions if icebergs were mentioned or his satellites blundered, instantly adding: "Excuse my bad French, ladies." But no, it was too good (?) English to be "bad French." However, since the mere wishing for the 'bergs would not bring them, Zee extracted a lugubrious promise that she should have timely notice of the first seen, whether by night or by day. Taking her at her word, with a spice of triumph in the summons, the captain sent for her between four and five o'clock, a.m. On deck at four o'clock in the morning, next door to the frigid zone. Think of it! It was midsummer at the Horn, and the weather delightful; but the nights were cold enough for Christmas in civilised regions.

Nothing but an iceberg, a once-in-a-lifetime wonder, could have drawn Zee from her warm bed out into the nose-nipping air. But lest the laugh should be all against her, Zee and the young widow who shared Zee's cabin soon appeared on deck, well muffled in cloaks and hoods. And there, of a surety, was a 'berg, sufficiently large to satisfy any curiosity-mania, and ere its outline could be clearly defined, another and yet another dotted the horizon.

The ship had gone out of her course to escape the 'bergs—a forlorn hope, for it was presently hemmed in

on all sides by zero's proud giants, and for three days and nights passed through successive fields of ice of every conceivable shape and size; some of the 'bergs were dead-white, some frosted and glistening, some blue, some green, while from one mountain rushed quite a body of water as it thawed in the sun. With a smiling sky overhead, clouds lowered on the captain's brow so long as the ice lasted, and "bad English" floated in vapory wreaths about the 'bergs, which are said to throw off a false light, misleading as to distance. Hence, on the third night, in a spirit of revenge, perchance, the 'bergs placed the ship in imminent peril of being blocked. To go forward was impossible, so she had to "back out;" and terrific work it was, judged by the unearthly sounds it occasioned. All hands able to hold a rope were in requisition, and the rushing about and the shouting made it appear as if, by order of their cloven-footed tyrant, the principalities and powers of the nether kingdom were making ready for a fat cargo of ripe souls, to be hurried all of a heap into orthodoxy's yawning abyss of unutterable woe.

The darkest hour before dawn (three o'clock) was the most critical. Panic, noise, nerved Zee, who had been tried by fire and flood, to quiet endurance, prompted her, indeed, to trim her sails and hoist her colors, as it would do almost every woman, but that it is esteemed lady-like to be useless or worse. The young widow was now on deck, fainting heroically. But, fearful of being in someone's way, Zee never so much as glanced at the ship's peril; she had her work to do to preserve anything like quiet in the saloon; one old lady, indeed, clung to her frantically all the time. Rex and Piri slept through it all. How sweet was that sleep to their mother! If they must have gone to the bottom, and could have slept on, Zee would just have folded her arms around them, and as the flood engulfed them, her kisses only would have told them she was with them to the last. Having lived through the turmoil and dangers of the night, the former being the greater, probably, the peep-o'-day *was gratefully* welcomed, and by the breakfast hour

they had bidden adieu, not regretfully, to the last 'berg. In lieu of dark clouds, mischief twinkled in the captain's eyes, as he inquired of Zee: "Well, have you had enough of icebergs now?" "Yes, ah yes, enough to repletion."

All the children were expected to keep clear of the saloon during the late dinner, and in fine weather they not unnaturally preferred the poop to their own cabins; but one day, the sea being rough and treacherous, Zee feared to leave her boys on the poop; but they begged to remain, and since all the children belonging to the saloon were there, except the little two-year old, she consented. But being conscious of a strange restlessness, she inquired of more than one gentleman (a thing she had never done before): "Is it safe to leave the children on the poop?" and the answer was "Oh, yes, they're safe," one gentleman adding: "especially Piri, he holds on so well."

Thus all fears were allayed, and she proceeded to dress for dinner when, a few minutes later, the father of the family of seven rushed excitedly through the saloon, crying: "What child's that overboard?" "Oh, no child," wailed Zee, her heart dying within her, as she followed him to the door. There Rex met her, wild and white with horror, screaming: "Piri's overboard! Piri's overboard!" Uttering a great cry, Zee threw up her arms stunned, quite stunned. Someone seized her and led her away, saying: "They'll save him. So and So is going overboard with a rope." No, his death-knell sounded, the little Piri's, you know, when she heard those awful words. They couldn't save him, and the thought of the child struggling with his mighty conqueror will ever remain an open wound. Still, she mourned too late, having been prevented rushing on deck and asking some strong man to save her boy. How could they have stood idle spectators of the dread scene! A wave threw the little man up upon its crest, his eyes wide open straining at the ship, his clasped hands thrown out in pitiful entreaty, "in prayer" it was said; but no, that was cant. It was his *mother* he wanted, and for the first time in his life she *failed him*. The mute appeal was vain.

Forgive the tears that start unbidden; forgive the love which dwells with painful interest on the sad details of a bereavement much to be lamented. It will never be known what the world and Zee lost in that boy. Why was she thus relentlessly pursued; why must she lose one of two, while the family of seven remained unbroken still? The younger of these was sitting beside him on the poop-deck—sitting for safety, and the sitting posture cost Piri his life; with one fell lurch of the ship he slipped out feet foremost; one piercing shriek rent the air as he went out—out into the cold, angry waters—waters that closed over him, heedless of the precious gem who had gone to swell the number of the pearls of the ocean.

If no accident had happened no one would have thought of danger. There was, nevertheless, a world of reproach to his mother in the fact that she had left him to his fate; admonished by her restlessness to call him down from the poop one moment before the fatal lurch she could have saved her boy, the next moment—where is he? And yet she might have been, as were several men, within a yard of him, and yet have failed to save him. It is well she did not see his last despairing agony, it would have burnt itself in upon her brain never to have been effaced: she has realised it only too fully.

Having flown back to the spot the instant he had uttered his cry, Rex had witnessed the whole tragedy. and his grief was so great that Zee had to turn and comfort him as best she could; he was again her only one, and their one relief was in weeping together. Realise her loss Zee could not. She jumped up many a time certain she heard Piri's voice; she must call him, his glad laugh was ringing in her ears, he could not have gone so far away, he must come back for "one kiss more," and she expected to see his little hand, blythe laddie that he was, pull aside the curtain of her cabin, as he peeped in with his roguish face to tell of some fresh mischief afloat, which would have lost half its fun had not his mother shared it with him. When he said: "I shouldn't mind being *drowned,*" Zee never imagined he could go alone.

Oh, why did he go? The grass will never grow over that grave.

A deeper sorrow could not have befallen Zee. It was not that she loved one child more than the other, or could better have spared her first-born; but all the winning trustfulness of childhood lingered about the little Piri, making him the nearer, though not dearer, to his mother. The day before he went away (six weeks to the very day of their leaving Auckland) he begged to have a look at his purse, which he had given into his mother's keeping; but as the request could not be complied with on the instant, it escaped the memory of both, or he would probably have wished to carry it in his pocket "just one day," and thus have taken it away with him. It is the only thing of his which remains to Zee; it is almost a bit of himself, he was so proud of it. There it lies, just as he left it, the coins all tarnished; they have never been touched since his tiny fingers put them in, and jingled them from very gladness. Many a time since then Zee has wanted a shilling, but never in her sorest need did she think of touching *his* money; she would have borne the gnawings of hunger, with Spartan-like heroism, before she could have broken in upon it.

It was said that Piri was "too good to live;" but that again was cant. It is impossible to be too good for the life Christ has consecrated; if he was not too good, how can mortal be too good? Piri would have made a noble man—the head and heart were right. His was a massive brow, such as is rarely given to a child—a healthy brain, too, for he was by no means precocious, though sufficiently natural to be almost original.

As the means of saving him were discussed, strong men brushed away the starting tear, which did no violence to their manhood. The singular affection shown the child by old and young had filled his last few weeks with wondrous joy. They knew it not, but in their every act of kindness they were weaving immortelles, such as money could not purchase, to honor *the dead.* Tiny hands, too, strewed amaranths, unconsciously, upon the lowly grave, the sport of the winds

and the waves. To his mother's memory that kindness is as sweetest incense, swelling his requiem with grateful notes, though he has gone from her sight and she seeks her darling sorrowing. No sailor's suit for Piri. He is singing his "little songs" in the better land, "Happy land!" anywhere where Piri is. "Lots and lots of kisses" salute his mother's vivid recollection of his pristine innocence. Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

The fatal gap, through which Piri had passed had been carefully laced with rope before Zee went again on the poop. How could she have overlooked it? She inquired of the captain whether it really had been left open up to the time of the accident; and, trying to throw the blame on "the man at the wheel," he answered, reluctantly, "Yes." Most culpable neglect. Fearing lest her baby girl should crawl through the opening and disappear, perhaps, without being seen, the mother of the family of seven said she had "again and again begged her husband to lace it;" but as he insisted "there was no danger," she said she "had determined to ask Zee that day to request its being done," believing in her potency of will and word. Hence the father's fear lest it should be "one of his own boys," on observing from his stern-cabin window that a child had gone out at that very opening. Mothers, remember little Piri, and the fatal gap. He suffered for all children.

There was Wrax, too, how could Zee tell him of his loss? He loved that child, if he ever loved anything; and his letter, written on the receipt of the painful intelligence, in which he did ample justice to his wife, was the one generous act of his life as far as she is concerned. It was a genuine outburst of repentance; sincere as fervent, so long as it lasted, and it revived the hope that this first real sorrow of his life might prove his salvation. Seeing and hearing the child in them, Piri's simple prattlings are household words of sweet significance; and his angel-face of infancy is ever present to the minds of his parents.

Both the editors of a weekly paper floated in the *saloon, versified* a little, and wishing to make Piri

living, and Piri lost, the subject of their song and lament, they kindly sent to ascertain Zee's wishes in reference thereto, intimating their willingness to refrain from mentioning him if she preferred it. Oh, yes, the wound was too green to admit of being dressed, with sweet spices even. But she regretted, at the end of the voyage, she had not allowed them to embalm him, that the friends he was never to know might have seen that he nestled, quite at home, in all hearts. His memory will be fragrant still to all on board that ship. Zee gave a little old book of his to a fellow passenger resident in a sister province, and treasuring it reverently for the sake of the guileless, happy boy, the gentleman has had it rebound, carefully preserving the name written therein ; and it was quite recently shown to Zee with much feeling. Meanwhile the ship sped on and on, and ere long hugged the shores of old England in a transport of gratitude. But for her irreparable loss the voyage had been delightful to Zee ; and now, to avoid the inquiry, Where's Piri ? on meeting with friends, she early apprised them of her loss, begging that it might not be mentioned for awhile. Handing a letter to Zee in the channel, the pilot informed her that several friends to whom, at their request, he had telegraphed the ship's arrival, had been to Gravesend the day before, in the hope of meeting her. The docks, consequently, were by no means blank to the travellers as they entered them, for mother and son received greetings from loved ones on shore. Yes, there were Wrax's eldest brother, one of his sisters, her husband, and their eldest daughter. Quite an excess of pleasure.

Distressed by the loss of Piri, and justly indignant at the culpable neglect which made it possible, and which they were unwilling to condone, the brothers mentioned threatened the captain with a full judicial inquiry. But, rightly or wrongly, Zee begged that nothing might be done ; no inquiry would give her back her boy ; the lesson would not be lost upon the captain ; no one regretted the accident more than did he. The neglect was to the last degree reprehensible, and the captain would have been severely censured, if

nothing more, but Zee could not hurt the man who had been so kind to her boy.

Impatient to set foot in fatherland once more, Zee and her friends soon left the ship. After having bidden farewell to her more immediate fellow-passengers, Zee was not less surprised than pleased to find the passengers between decks standing in a row waiting to bid her a respectful "Good-bye"—a mark of esteem as grateful as unlooked for. The friends had scarcely lost sight of the vessel when Zee, strangely enough, found a pure, fresh-gathered lily, lying in her path; she almost stepped upon it. A lily of the valley in the London docks! Surely an angel had dropped it at Zee's feet. No kindlier welcome could her native soil afford; sweet harbinger of happy days to come. "It is just like God, he is always dropping a lily in my path," was Zee's thought, as she gratefully inhaled its perfume; and in thought, too, laid it reverently on that lowly grave, deep in the heart of the ocean. She has the lily still; it lies in yon purse, *his* purse, you know.

With Rex she rusticated almost as completely as in the primeval forest, there was such a backwoods' air in his simple remarks. His first trip by rail was from Greenwich to London, and the train running over the roofs of the houses alarmed him, even to paleness, and he said, tremblingly: "I'm sure we shall run into the houses. How is the train steered, and what is the rudder like?" Later on, observing the many sparrows hopping about in the road, he begged that the cab, in which he was driving, might be stopped, lest it should "run over them."

Merlee, too, had come to town expressly to await the arrival of the absent ones, and to escort them, as she did, to the home Zee never expected again to see. There, in its friendy porch, impatient to give cordial greeting to the returned "exiles," stood the father, the mother, and Wrax's mother, a hale gentlewoman of some eighty years; and around them clustered many other members of both families. But the re-union, under circumstances painful in their every aspect, was intensely sad; and when the wife and no wife found

herself encircled by the loving arms of one and another, she bowed her head broken-hearted.

But not yet was she desolate; she had one jewel still; indeed, she felt rich when she could look around on the dear, familiar faces, "so little changed. Time had left his impress nowhere," Zee said; but no one could return the compliment. It was agreed that she looked ten years older (which perhaps meant twenty) than when she left England, five years before. She had lived so much more than had they in the same number of years, as compared with their smooth and easy course; a lifetime of misery had been compressed into her every day.

Strange to say, she no sooner found herself among friends than she became oppressed by a sense of loneliness. Her first inquiries had been of Wrax. How was he, where was he, what was he? Questions held in abeyance, no word having been received from him. Her own, and the children's anticipated return, gave color to the report, industriously circulated in her native town, that Wrax "was dead." And lest, through inadvertency, the report should reach and pain her ere she had time to reflect on its want of foundation, Wrax's eldest brother told her of it at once. In all the womanly tenderness of his heart he would, if he could, have shielded her from every painful thought.

In deference to the wishes of the friends who furnished her wardrobe, Zee donned sable robes, feeling it to be a sad mockery of grief at the loss of her little darling. When mourning is measured by relationship only, it must be as superficial as are its flimsy trappings; it would, therefore, answer every purpose, and save a deal of trouble, if those who love to indulge the luxury of grief in crape and paramatta, could hire mourning as hearses and coaches are hired. To publish the extent of our poor lacerated "feelings" is a biting sarcasm on the felicity of the heaven promised —a sarcasm worthy of uncultured heathenism.

CHAPTER XIV.

THINKING AGAINST EATING.

IT was May, charming May, when Zee returned to English country life, and from around her on every hand she absorbed beauty enough to glorify a dozen women. All nature sang of life, and when walking with her sisters they would ask her why she lingered. Lingered! because kind fairies, opening bright visions to her hungry senses, dogged her footsteps; she must needs halt and tread softly, lest she crush her friends of the mossy dell, to whom her sisters, beauty-logged by familiarity, had become indifferent. Then, too, the lark, that tiny speck in cloudland, heard again after many years, carried the listener to heaven's gate as she watched, with the rapturous delight uprising of the one visible link between the upper and the nether springs of joy; and angels bending earthward met her upturned face as they, too, listened to the song, perchance as sweet to them as to Zee. "What ear hath not heard" was never brought so near to Zee by the human voice as by the birds out in the woods, where buttercups and daisies hold carnival, with yon blue vault for canopy.

It were well that the "gutter children" of large cities should know the God of the country; that youth's happiest hours should be associated with the birds. Nothing, perhaps, has such a home-ring, God-ring, or inspires such thrilling emotions, now of joy, now of penitence, as the jocund laughter of the green woods; and if youthful feet stray rashly in bye-path meadow, bird-voices, angel-voices, will call them home; bygone memories will come trooping on the stage, and bow the head penitently ere age has frosted the hair or the heart.

Out in the woods with the wild flowers, her boy of the higher world was close to Zee; and in crossing a common she once found herself, quite unconsciously, walking zigzag, lest she should tread upon the daisies. Piri would have thought it "so cruel." He never wearied of hunting for the scrubby things, scarcely to be called flowers, growing on the far-away sea coast. If he could but once have feasted his eyes on the English wild flowers, they would have given a sweeter note to his "little songs," and a finer lustre to his glad, black eyes. Rex, though less enthusiastic than his brother in the matter of flowers, was bewitched by the profusion of hedge-row glories, and gathered whole basketsful for the very joy of it.

Poor Rex, feeling as he said, "all alone in the world," was too old for the toys love had laid aside for the little one: he needed them not. After his long holiday, school was his business; and he was placed boarder at the best school in Zee's native town, so that she saw but little of him. Knowing she would soon arrive at the end of her leave, and must give her boy up for the first time in his life, she was anxious to wean each from the other by degrees.

Pursuing the pleasure-giving course mapped out for her by her one dearest friend, whose open-handed generosity almost burdened Zee with the cares riches bring, she flitted from pillar to post too hurriedly to allow the scenes to photograph themselves on the mind; so she carried some characteristic atom from each spot visited, and folded it in paper, on which was written whence it was taken and the names of her companions for the hour, in order to recall the histories of the silent, yet eloquent, memorials at leisure.

Feeling the rejuvenescent vitality of the shady lanes and avenues centuries old, through which she occasionally roamed, Zee said her friends "might well look as young as ever," sheltered by such enlivening quietude. Having kept her heart as fresh as those charming lanes, though many winters had taken liberties with her now silvery-wreathed brow, Zee's *lily of lilies,* and oft-time companion, a sister of Wrax, *said, while* sighing at its hopelessness: "I suppose I

ought to learn how to grow old." No, oh no! one is as old as the heart is, no older. The growing mind defies chronological reckoning, hence the acquisition of knowledge resulting in practical goodness keeps the soul ever going. But if the years bring no mental wealth with them, merely rob us of our youth, old age presents a prospect blank indeed. Silliness is not youthfulness.

Of the live mountain scenery of the Scotch highlands, its hills, dales, glens and passes; its falls, rivers, and lochs; its purple heather, diamond-studded with the foamy spray of its madly-rushing torrents; of the graceful deer, too, with the gently vigilant eyes, and nervously-distended nostrils, slaking their thirst on the margin of a stream, rippling lazily over its rocky bed, or as, startled by intruders, the pretty creatures made for the pine-forest hard by, and from its safe cover, casting timid glances around, seemed to invite friend and foe to a game of hide-and-seek; Zee, judged by her nerve-poised excitability, could entertain the reader for an hour if certain he would not skip it.

Floods, unbounded by space, "mists" so-called, which in the sun's rays set all nature steaming with a humidity well named "soft," overtook the sight-seers when climbing rugged heights, or rained them within doors when they would fain have climbed over the hills and away. But Time's wings tire not; the delightful trip had come to an end, and having packed their individual carry-all with a wealth of stolen beauty which left the plundered none the poorer, the party bade farewell regretfully to their kind entertainers. The globe is a different thing to him who knows it only in his study, and to him who has a personal knowledge of two-thirds of its surface; hence, unless entirely absorbed with self, the soul is the richer, not the poorer, for the time and money spent in travel; it expands the capacity of enjoyment of both eye and mind, leaving much honey, if a refining sting, in brushing conservative cobwebs off the heart and brain.

Zee's spirit, if nothing else, had been purified in suf-

fering's crucible, and admitting that there are any number of degrees of refinement in this disordered world, and that Zee was, and is still, very low down in the scale, she was yet amazed to find how completely she had distanced some of her English friends, except in the matter of gloss. Besides which, full of blundering inconsistency though her life had been to those to whom her submission had not been pledged as to Wrax, there was about her still sufficient truthfulness to make her presence irksome to the artificial and self-centred, who, denying her the possession of one little clinging virtue, a budding lily or violet, were prone to say: "She likes that best she least resembles; I am glad the seas divide her life from ours; her every word and deed is a reproach to us, so much so, in truth, that if we were worth her weight in gold she would make us feel that she was rich, not we." And that is precisely what those who mean to do as they like will not endure. In training one's own will and that of others, what one *likes* must, nevertheless, yield to what is right in principle. But for the sheltering love of her one dear friend, to whom she owed her visit home, that visit would have been one of all but perpetual snubbing from those who fancied they were sorry for her, but whose sympathy, in fact, remained very much with Wrax, who had never wounded their rampant self-love. The treatment Zee received was so precisely what would be meted to one in her circumstances by those who had done "well to themselves," that they were conscious of no unkindness in thrusting her poverty continually upon her notice; they had never begun to think to any purpose. They worshipped success, and sacrificed all else to it; and had Zee done well to herself, they would have outrivalled each other in a parade of affection and good cheer in her honor.

But for others' sake—unfortunates like Zee, meriting a tenderness they rarely meet with—it must be told that notwithstanding that much of her time might be occupied in sight-seeing, she was not to look upon her visit home as a holiday; any such illusion was quickly dispelled by her being told in one instance that the

"spring clean" had been deferred that she might assist therein. Zee was not afraid of work, and although this circumstance, speaking volumes, is mentioned now for the first time quite uncomplainingly, she blushed for the coarseness that made such cruelty possible, especially when one and another, carefully elaborating for her delectation the reception given to this and that well-to-do member of her family on a visiting tour, wound up their grand doings on such state occasions with: "We knew, of course, that you would expect nothing of the kind." No, indeed, she knew them too well; she knew they had not the remotest idea what unselfish generosity might mean, notwithstanding that they gave freely of their abundance. How much "kindness," real or otherwise, is due to the fabled "long-stocking"!

In her husband's family Zee met the tenderest consideration, and the unlovely members of her own family are what they are because they have no desire to grow, except in material wealth and such general information as pays. There is all the difference of the real and the sham between the religious and the pious world, the thinking and the eating world; every word of the former being freighted with thought, they become educators, in the truest sense, of all within the sphere of their influence; and their scorn of mere money-grubbing is justly pronounced. Goodness and happiness are twin sisters, so much alike the great parent cannot tell them apart. Nothing can give so manly a bearing, so fearless an eye, so frank and guileless a smile, as to know that neither the love of gold nor any other passion can seduce the soul from its allegiance to purity and truth. Nothing material can enrich, nothing impoverish such beings.

Perceiving that to recall Wrax to his wife's remembrance was to rob her short reprieve of all its brightness, he was allowed to drop out of a recognised existence by general consent. But, at length, having missed her more than he was willing to own, possibly, he was found urging her return to himself before her leave had expired, sending her at the same time £25 as *part of her passage*-money back to Auckland, money

already her own, by the way, being but a small part of six New Zealand Bank shares she had bought with the money her one dearest friend had sent her that she might have a little at command in case of need, which shares Wrax had prevailed on the ever-foolish Zee to sell immediately before she left Auckland. His letters, however, encouraging her to expect to find himself much changed for the better, nerved her to brave the dangers before which strong men quail, and made the inevitable parting from friends comparatively easy.

Missing his brother with an abiding sense of loneliness, Rex was slow in making friends; he was, nevertheless, a strong, healthy lad, happy at school on the whole, and content to be left behind; and his mother was more than content to leave him to his kind caretakers, his good uncle especially, whose thoughtful love having gladdened every moment of her stay in England followed her to its close; and as a slight diversion for her on the voyage, he himself arranged a tiny garden in which he planted lilies of the valley, snowdrops, crocuses, etc., carefully covering them in with moss, and lacing the whole with fine wire. The garden, together with her hyacinths in their glasses, was suspended from the brass rod over the saloon table, and her various birds were accommodated aft of the saloon.

Her cabin was shared by a lady quite to Zee's mind, a bride-elect, bent on turning a New Zealand bush-home into a paradisaic bower; the far-off lover successfully laid a private telegraphic cable across the briny deep, and swift wings not electrical were now wafting towards him a neat specimen of London-pride. Having, amid a whirl of excitement, garnered much food for reflexion which she proposed to digest at leisure, the quiet monotony of the voyage was welcome to Zee, who craved the solitude to be found among strangers. Once fairly afloat, however, she surprised herself busily taking stock of her fellow-passengers, one of whom she eyed askance from his studied attempts to generally *ingratiate* himself. Experience had proved to Zee *that respect* is seldom merited by those who need to *purchase* it.

In the tropics Zee's miniature garden came up in a night like Jonah's gourd—the flowers were "fast," as travel-stained creation is apt to be. Every fresh thing is beautiful at sea, and from the flowers strong men stole kisses, gratefully, as they watched the hyacinths growing at both ends with special interest. At the dinner hour, one day, Zee fastened a lily, folded in its own green leaf, in the captain's coat. He said: "It is the first flower I've seen so far out at sea; I shall preserve it among my treasures." Wonder did he keep his word?

The matron of the single women on board was a man! at least the husband did his wife's work, she being too feeble, and being unable to prevail on his charges "to go below," one night at the usual hour of 9 p.m., the man-matron complained to the captain, who shouted from the poop: "All single women go below immediately;" but wielding the cudgels for the women a storm of discordant hisses from angry men broke upon the calm night-air. Returning to the charge, the captain shouted again: "If you don't go below immediately, I'll put you on bread-and-water for a week;" and again defiant groans burst from the men, sufficiently prolonged to curdle one's blood. Nowhere else, perhaps, are moon and stars and blue ethereal sky so transcendently beautiful as in the tropics, and this was a gem of a night. Striding angrily about, the captain suddenly demanded: "What shall I do?" of Zee, who was walking with her lady friend on the poop. As she made no reply, the captain said again: "I will know what you would recommend." "Mercy," returned Zee quietly. "Mercy?" exclaimed the captain, "that makes the matter worse than ever." "So long," persisted Zee, "as the women are well-behaved, nine o'clock is too early to send them to their close, miserable dens on such nights as these." The captain, however, as he strode about in the sulks, or something better, said: "You've doubled the difficulty; I'll never ask you again." Clinching the plea for "mercy," a gentleman declared: "It is the first time I ever heard a woman plead for mercy on women," and forthwith quoted: "*Mercy is twice blessed*," etc. Nothing more,

however, was heard of "bread-and-water" rations, nor was there any further demonstration of ill-feeling, each party becoming more accommodating, probably.

The birds, that unfailing source of amusement on an ocean voyage, had grown wary; they had learnt that the leviathans which skim the deep gave them meat, but the meat had an indigestible hook in it; that despite the devoted attentions of powder-and-shot bestowed upon them, they did not take well to salt water after having been riddled; nor did they approve of promenading the deck, subject to the vulgar gaze of a new order of beings, 'yclept men and women.

Hence they kept their distance, but patience was at length rewarded by two Cape pigeons becoming entangled in the lines thrown out astern, one of which belonged to a little fellow in the second cabin, whose good fortune can be appreciated only as one realises the crowds of sportsmen hanging over the bulwarks, crazy for such luck. His face all aglow with the ebullition of excitement, he was about to run off to show his prize to his mother, when a passenger said: "Let me look at it." The bird was given with child-like pride and perfect trust, when the fellow coolly threw the bird up in the air—his own boy's line had caught no bird. With a half groan the child involuntarily raised his eyes and his hands after his bird, then dropped his head and ran to hide his tears on his mother's bosom; not even to her had he been allowed to show his pretty bird.

The dead silence which followed the dastardly act was more eloquent than a volley of hard words; and if indignation could cremate, that creature's small body would have been reduced to ashes. And of all who witnessed his meanness, no one despised him more probably than did his wife; she was a lady and won the respect of every one; but she had "mated with a clown," and he invariably spoke of the passengers between decks as "those brutes," "those wretches," or "those beasts." His pride had been mortified in permission having been given to the many to go astern *to catch* or shoot the birds. Thenceforward he was *always* being "robbed" by "those wretches," as they

passed his cabin window on going round the poop gallery, though they "robbed" no one else. A peep into the neat poop cabins must have been like a succession of pretty pictures to the tiny dwellers in the darkness between decks, whose remarks anent the cabins, believing themselves to be unheard, were quite refreshing; Zee and her friend only wished they had a store of sweets to shower among them. When the child's father asked the fellow "how he dared to take such a liberty with the bird," etc., the fellow put him off with some cowardly excuse; but he had ultimately to beg the child's pardon. Tyranny such as he exercised must give place to a growing intelligence. He was a staff-captain in the army and afterwards promoted; a soldier perhaps, a gentleman never. The reader will be prepared to hear that it was he who was at such pains to ingratiate himself with all at the beginning of the voyage. And he would sit at the cuddy table reading his Bible by the hour; much good it had done him.

Now, in view of the cable being paid out, Zee was loth to leave her ocean bed and board; falling into exactly the right niche, she drank in the poetry of motion, as the ship ran before the waves, now curling their proud crests in baffled majesty, anon spending themselves in foam at her feet, to begin again the never-ending game with renewed might. She loved the water, stern though the treacherous element had been to her; with it she entered into many sweet ties; through it her boy beckoned to her, and she oftimes became possessed of an almost overpowering impulse to throw herself into the water and go home the way he went. She and the bride-elect were named "the inseparables;" the merry-thought was always between them, and they were charged with having monopolised all the fun in the ship.

The end of the uneventful voyage found all on board greeting the shores of their future home in full feather; shores whose picturesqueness is now in a measure destroyed by signs of commercial prosperity and enterprise; the foreground being occupied by huge brick buildings, as a set-off to which, however, Zee

knew that a few friends would hail her return with pleasure. Not to a soul had she breathed one word of her husband's untoward career; scarcely to herself had one distrustful thought dimmed the horizon of a brighter day. Still, now that the hour of meeting was close at hand, she would fain have deferred it indefinitely, lest he himself should rudely dispel all kindly thoughts of him. But the living morn found her looking nervously for his boat; eight o'clock, nine o'clock, found her looking in vain; and jocularly prognosticating all sorts of evil of the slothful one, Zee was finely teased by one and another. But as the breakfast bell rang she descried Wrax making with speed for the ship, quite as early as she could have expected him, knowing his habit of hugging the pillow; for he must have risen hours earlier than was his wont. He was well, though white to the lips, and miserably bachelor-like in appearance; still, his joy at his wife's return was boundless, and he declared he would never, *never* spare her again.

The bride-elect had unconsciously fortified her for the yet future, experience having taught Zee that when heartsease is at its highest sorrow is at hand; thus bitter and sweet are married, the cross is enwreathed with flowers. Unfortunately, it is to be feared, her friend, whose strong sense of duty would make her faithful to the death, failed to realise the proverbial "slip," but became a wife within a week of landing, and well the breast-knot suited her, till it grew too knotty.

The new house, respecting which Zee had not indulged the ghost of a hope, still dreamily occupied a vacant allotment in that running-to-waste domain Wrax carried on his broad shoulders. Having soon parted company with the folk with whom Zee left him, and tried various other modes of living, as a last resource, Wrax made bachelor's hall of a cottage of his own, to which he now led his wife. Such a piggery! One glance told Zee that herself and Wrax were as much at variance as to cleanliness as to other matters; she hesitated to unrobe, to hang bonnet and cloak against the wall; whereas to lay them down was *beyond the* scope of possibility.

Each having much of interest to communicate to the other, Wrax would have had Zee sit and chat with dirt all around. Impossible! the walls had ears and eyes too, since daddy-longlegs held undisputed possession of every corner. One, two, three, yea, a dozen things were wanted ere she could sit and chat in comfort. First of all, a strong woman to turn house out of window, and Wrax with it, until the piggery, or a part of it, was converted into a snuggery, when he might return to a cosy tea. Finding that nothing remained to him but to do as he was bidden, he reluctantly exhumed an active body from the lower regions for a general lather and scald, in which his energetic wife, fastening up her dress, prepared to take part.

So spiritedly did the charwoman throw strength and elbow-grease about, that by tea-time she had thoroughly sweetened two rooms from floor to ceiling. And by many a finishing touch here and there, Zee had earned a relish for tea, a meal to be had in remembrance, so overjoyed was Wrax in having Zee to share it with him. She, too, was in a measure glad to be at her post by his side, although she was compelled by the first kiss to accept the disgusting fact, with an inward groan, that Wrax was Wrax still.

Her return to Wrax would have been strenuously opposed by her best friends, but that in going she had stipulated for her return at all costs. Having fainted under a too heavy cross, and being unwilling she should continue to bear it alone, while admitting the less said about it the better, her friends made Zee promise, in the event of Wrax's habits remaining unchanged, she would mention her trouble at once to those whose friendship she prized, urging that it would be a relief to her and to them, nor would they respect her the less for so doing. Acting on their advice, she did open her heart with much sorrow, and, strangely enough, her trouble took wings, never again presenting the same dread aspect; she marvelled, indeed, that it should ever have been so great a burden.

The secret was no secret; the skeleton had stood revealed long before she left Auckland. Shrinking with cowardly sensitiveness from "The hint malevolent,

the look oblique," she had done her friends an injustice, and though respecting her desire to conceal what was so much to be regretted, they knew she was planting thorns cruel as useless in her own pillow. But now she was, of course, happier in mind and more at ease with those friends; yet notwithstanding the relief afforded, the reflexion forced itself upon her, happier anywhere, everywhere without Wrax. Lonely, too, and cheerless was the home wanting her boy; but she counted the cost before she gave him up; to know him better off was the one drop of honey in her cup; not for the world would she, if she could, have called him back.

During the influx of red-coats, Auckland had gloried in a tidal-wave of unparalleled money-making, and sharing in the plunder, Wrax declared: "Money was made hand over fist;" and rents being fabulously high, he invested in house-property, from which source alone his income was considerable; and if he had entered into no fresh speculations, and if rents had continued as exorbitant but for three months longer, Wrax would have sailed grandly out of port with all sails well set to the breeze. But the war with the natives ended; the Imperial troops were recalled; the seat of Government removed from Auckland; and each and all occurring simultaneously, such an exodus of both the military and civilians took place, that the commercial collapse of Auckland was sudden and complete, and house-property, in common with all things else, became a drug in the market.

He added tenfold to his misfortunes by keeping his wife in ignorance thereof. The advertised sale: "By order of the mortgagee" of certain properties of Wrax, was her first intimation of the impending crisis. Moreover, despite the general stagnation, and in opposition to Zee's expressed wishes, he had set men to work to build their new home. Then from his numerous creditors came, for the first time in New Zealand, summons after summons thick and fast; things looked too dark ahead to all men to make *leniency* possible. And so long as those summonses *kept rolling* in, Zee could make nothing of Wrax,

try how she would; curses only were on his lips, until the day before the advertised sale of the property; then she prevailed upon him to give her a clear statement of accounts, which proved his solvency beyond question. In his wife lay his only hope of salvation; for his creditors, believing neither in his honor nor his solvency, acted on the principle of "first come first served." It was a thousand pities to lose all without an effort to save it; and notwithstanding her inexperience and all but insuperable objection to business, Zee determined to save all, exacting only a promise from Wrax that in saving all he would afford her the necessary assistance, keeping carefully in the background the while.

To save the property already in the market was the first consideration, and it was withdrawn directly Zee had her honor-saving machinery in full trim. She then interviewed the more clamorous creditors; and being careful to make no doubtful promises, begged for time, pledging her honor, which by the way was as safe as England's bank, that their claims should be paid to the last penny if time were but given her. She met but a cold shoulder in every case; still she made the best terms she could, and forthwith set to work to collect and pay away all moneys due to Wrax, Oh, what work it was!

The following is an instance of how she, strong in her rectitude of purpose, nailed men to their word. A certain M.D. owed Wrax considerably over £100, and gave Zee promissory notes of £20 each for the amount. Having once failed to meet the note when due, Zee warned him not to fail again, and presenting herself as per date of bill, the doctor said, with many regrets: "I can do nothing for you to-day." "Very well, doctor, I'll sit here till you can," responded Zee, dropping into an easy chair, quietly ignoring his manifold apologies and the many patients awaiting his leisure. Seeing the cold disdain in the look of the sturdy piece of oak that would not take no for an answer, the doctor accepted the situation and gave her a cheque for the amount, which was quickly divided among her hungry brood.

The street-door required care in securing it, and hearing a fumbling at it one night, when summonses were pouring in fast, Zee jumped out of bed and to her horror confronted a strange man, with whom Wrax parleyed and then dismissed. And during the small hours of another night a tremendous thundering was heard at their back door, and Zee was certain they had come to grief again; but saying "it was only a lark," Wrax refused to rise to quiet her apprehensions. As they were seated at breakfast next morning, a coarse, ill-conditioned fellow passed their window, and knocking at the door, it was instantly opened by Wrax, who evidently knew the man, and by a sign imposed silence on him. Wrax then went out into the street, carefully closing the door after him. Thinking that he was playing her false, laughing at her behind her back, Zee, whose nerves were too strained to make practical jokes bearable, broke down utterly, asking in all her helplessness, Where can I go? what will be the end of it? But sorrow or no sorrow, she must choke back her tears; out into the world she must go; much business had to be transacted that day. Fortunately Wrax soon returned and allayed her fears. Knowing that the bailiffs might be hanging on the outskirts of their dwelling, that very ill-conditioned fellow had pounded Wrax's door "for fun." How base he must have been!

The property was saved; but with all her indefatigable energy Zee failed to pay the money into Court as fast as could be wished; else, by the Saturday of that worst of bad weeks, the more pressing debts would have been wiped off, and Zee would have escaped as a bird from the fowler; and oh, what a thanksgiving-day Sunday would have been! Never did tempest-tossed mariner hail port more gratefully than she hailed the prospective rest of that first day of the week; she had kept her eye steadily fixed on the goal; it was the alpenstock by which she had climbed Mount Opposition. But it was not to be; she was in the hands of the notoriously dilatory lawyers, and had to learn the value of the Sabbath, sealed by the law's blessed protection. Dreading lest what Wrax called "a limb of the law" should appear on the scene, and

"an execution" should add to the already needless misery and expense of the summonses, they barricaded their door and windows that Saturday night, not daring to have fire or light, scarcely daring to speak or breathe.

But freedom from undue pressure came at last. First making their domicile bailiff-proof, Zee sallied forth again on Monday morning to those horrid lawyers, and once clutching the money for which she had waited patiently, it melted as only money can which is already swallowed up of debt. But Zee was free, free, free! Well done, daring, indomitable Zee! She had saved all; and hammer and tongs, pots, kettles, and pans served her for joy-bells; there was a clear light in her eye and sweet ring in her voice, and she held her head higher than she had done for many a day. They would have to skin a flint and live on it for many a month before they were out of debt; but all the remaining creditors had faith in Zee, her word was sufficient bond, and from them personally she received kind consideration the instant she took Wrax's affairs into her own hands.

O men, have the courage to trust your wives! Zee would have been spared the wading through much mud, moral and material, that first winter of her return to Auckland, and much money swallowed up in court dues, lawyer's fees, etc., would have been saved, had she earlier known Wrax's financial position. If in business matters she had ventured on an inquiry or suggestion, he had silenced her insolently with: "Mind your own business, and leave me to mine."

But now, as Zee cleared the way for him, and he could see a chance of keeping his head above water, he vowed by all that was extravagant he would never more touch the hated drink. He even talked of settling on Zee the property which she had saved; but he never did it, nor did she wish it—she was too silly by half for that; mere talk as it was, however, she was glad to have won such an acknowledgment of services rendered.

CHAPTER XV.

STRONG TO DO RIGHT.

PRACTISING abstinence once more, Wrax busied himself about the completion of the new home with delightful animation. Glad days those, little short of enchantment, from which Zee reaped a full harvest of satisfaction; no need to tell her honey was sweet; wordy love she abhorred; Wrax's every word and deed were eloquent thanks. The pair, in truth, were "nesting" with more than the ardour of early youth; for since Wrax could not bear to be alone, Zee went with him at his request, ever ready to lend a helping hand, taking lunch for both, and book and work to beguile odd moments.

Notwithstanding that bricklayers and carpenters were still rampaging therein, the October following the May in which Zee landed the second time in Auckland found them moving into the new home; and being consecrated by abstinence it possessed in itself a lost yet found sacredness, filling each heart with supreme content, although flint broth alternated with tea-kettle soup in their daily bill-of-fare; such matters Wrax left uncomplainingly to his wife, who was still occupied in wiping off old scores.

Better die than live a debased sot. The sudden change in Wrax's habits—a change wholly right even though death should result—occasioned him a severe attack of his old enemy, rheumatic gout, which confined him to his bed for weeks, and the frightful pain he endured, together with the incessant attention he required, made nursing work most trying. Still Zee grudged no reasonable service. As convalescence progressed the, till now, quite strange sight might be seen —husband and wife strolling together most pleasantly,

calling now on this friend, now on that, by whom they were kindly received, and not a semblance of patronage wounded the sensitiveness of the once prodigal Wrax.

But inwardly noting a growing restlessness and irritability, which told plainer than words that Wrax was nursing the desire for drink, courting an excuse to indulge, Zee asks of herself, tremblingly: How will Christmastide and its hideous drunkenness affect him? The day itself they spent together at a picnic, and Zee was thankful for that much. But ere the year was numbered with the dead, Wrax was his baser self again, and his wife would fain have clung to the clay-cold skirts of the bearded year and have gone with him out into the darkness. What a hansel for the new year! For nearly three months all had been unclouded sunshine; now an impenetrable fog made all things grisly and grey. Again Wrax thrust aside his one true friend for the mocking fiend, which at once lured him astray and derided his gullibility. Even in his path God had dropped a "lily," but Wrax trampled it to dust.

O reader! is it necessary to enlarge on the wife's misery—can you not forgive her tears? It was foolish to trust him; but until his head or hers is laid low, "fool" in the matter of trust will be written against Zee's name. He was meanly drinking other people's money, too; he hadn't a penny he could honestly call his own. How base was his conduct! A man is a man if he possess the liberty to do as he likes, no matter to what it may lead; and on the strength of that devil's lie men are "so easily led away" as to have become a byword and a derision to the weaker (?) sex.

Zee had been recently introduced to a lady of education and refinement, who was said to have saved her husband from the drunkard's fate by following him nightly to the one public-house of the village, and sitting with him there until he chose to return home. A right brave thing to do; but few women are equal to such a fiery ordeal, and certainly only a lady could pass *through it* effectively—a lady in refinement, if not *by birth* and education. Wrax would have murdered

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audient audacity: "I am so weak when the
me to stand alone, that if I saw a glass of
whatever his favorite beverage may be—
before me, and knew that by drinking it I
se my soul, I should drink it." Of course he
because his scepticism as to the soul goes deeper
ove of the drink; and this scepticism is all
versal. Get men to believe in the soul, *i.e.*, in
anliness, and the force of temptation is gone.
annot be overcome of evil, though counterfeit
ess can be and is. The man has been taught to
his burden upon the Lord, and he does it with a
; but if he had nothing to gain by trading on the
sentimentality of the unreflecting, his words
ld correspond with his deeds, and he would say:
e drink I see, I believe in; the soul I don't see, I
't believe in; so if I had a thousand souls to lose,
y might all go for a drink of good beer." He will
ver be frightened or cajoled out of the hell of his
wn choice into heaven by vivid representations of
hell-fire, however material; but by all that is reasonable let him enjoy his hell alone, with kindred spirits, that is.

With the consistency that marks many legislative enactments, the would-be suicide by water, knife, or poison, is treated as a criminal; but the sot, who kills himself and others by slow degrees, is a respectable member of society, encouraged to do as he likes so long as his means last. Well men know there is nothing of God in the fatal glass, but the perversion of his good gifts; and yet the Church has sheltered the iniquitous traffic, by permitting her office-bearers, etc., to trade on the vices of their fellows, while she talked feebly of "moderation." Moderation, indeed! Ever since the flood all sorts and conditions of men have tried moderation; when, *when* are they going to grow strong on it? The Bishop of Peterborough would rather have England "free than sober." Why not free *and* sober? Is it too high a standard for a Christian prelate? If a work hop, he will know that the love of drink, and sister the love of gold, are well-nigh omnipo *kening* perceptibly every stronghold of

purity and truth, eating to the core of England's honor till it is no longer stainless; the nation's strength dwindles, her intellect is beclouded; her sons are her betrayers, the enemy (by no means confined to the "unwashed" and to back-slums) within her gates is mightier than the foe without; and if the tidal-wave of her debasement be not speedily turned aside, drunken, gold-crazed Christendom will become the scorn and derision of the whole earth.

It is to be hoped that there is no profanity in assuming that his grace of Peterborough is a little, just a little, wiser than his great-great-great grandfather; if he is he will see that England sober *is* England free, because man is free to do the right, and the right only. The instant he puts himself in the power of any vice he becomes a slave, and must accept the slave's penalty, even while trying vainly, as he does on the plea of "necessary evil," to exculpate himself by throwing his responsibility upon God. By preaching up man's supremacy and woman's subserviency, irrespective of all rights and duties, the Church has so wickedly played into the drunkard's hands as to be accessory to making him what he is. But just as preaching in favor of slavery so outraged the common-sense, the common humanity of the people, that it dealt its death-blow; in like manner, preaching up our vile drinking customs, entailing untold misery on the innocent, the unborn, will help their overthrow. Men despise cant.

And perceiving that so long as woman's nonentity is established by law, man will in a measure despise her co-operation, the enlightenment of the present century will, it is hoped, prompt the bishop to work to the death for woman's emancipation; unless, indeed, he would rather England should be enslaved than woman should be free. But nay, constituting himself her knight-errant, he will demand the release of England's state prisoners, the greater, the feminine half, of her population, and thus atone for any injustice those state prisoners may have received at his hands. Once recognise woman's right to a will of her own, and *permit its* legitimate exercise, she will magnanimously *forgive the* injustice of the past, and prove beyond

question that being essentially practical and radically reforming, her administrative ability is of the highest order. This is abundantly substantiated by what intelligent women have done, and are now doing, despite the physical, intellectual, and moral disabilities, consequent on their ignominious social position. Taking an intelligent interest in the practical details of all questions affecting the public weal, when once woman, with a definite purpose, stands shoulder to shoulder with man, there will not, it is believed, be found a licensed word or a spot in print or in public on which a pure womanly woman may not look. What is wrong for woman is equally wrong for man.

English friends had taken care that the new home should be replete with comfort; its simple necessaries had travelled with Zee direct from the old world, and so trimly and cosily did each article of furniture settle itself, that the nest was pretty enough to set Zee crooning over it like a month-old bride. Inviting in itself, she had nothing more wherewith to gladden it, save the sunshine of the heart; but that possessed no intrinsic value for Wrax. She loved her home, and could have forgiven him many a fault had he loved it likewise. The home was not at fault, it seldom is in the case of the drunkard, whose wife dare not be other than good; it is that blackest of black ills, a truant will, that lays waste the home, the man, his all.

Revelling again in frightful excesses after the three months' honeymoon, Wrax saw all things backwards; where his sanity began or ended, it were hard to tell. Still, had he but given sufficient attention to business to pay his debts and to keep the pot boiling, Zee's life would have been comparatively happy; in fact, she did live under a brighter sky than of old. Wrax had at once drawn his own wisdom tooth, and helped his wife to cut hers by allowing her to take the children home; he had set her at liberty, she might take herself off at any moment. Having thus turned the tables upon himself, his treatment of Zee, queer at best, had undergone a corresponding change, and paradoxical though it appear, from the instant she could look him in the face, half defiantly, he respected her. Of course

he did ; we respect our equals, not our inferiors. But to have stood on an independent footing with him had been impossible, save for the merciful kindness (shame that it must be written) of his brother, who relieved her of the care of her boy. Even now it was hard to see the big, strong Wrax lying in bed to all hours of the day, when he ought to have been usefully employed ; but better there than in the public house, reasoned Zee ; so she let him lie in peace.

He soon drifted into another difficulty, causing a sharp passage of arms between himself and his wife. Becoming bond for a publican for a considerable amount, the bond, for which Wrax had received nothing except perhaps "drinks," was forfeited, and he was expected to pay it. Resolved, however, not to pay the money, he immediately secured his "effects" by giving a bill of sale thereon to one to whom he was under some obligation. Telling Zee what he had done when unpleasant consequences were likely to ensue, he forgot to prepare her for a visit from wolves in sheep's clothing. Hence, some weeks later on, in walked two bailiffs, before Zee had had time to answer their modest knock at the door. The men politely offered to show her their authority for the distraint, but she waived it aside with : "I won't trouble you," and donning bonnet and cloak, walked out of the house, leaving them in full possession.

Having forgotten about the bond and the bill of sale, she expected some fresh calamity had overtaken them, and hurried in distress to the house of a kind friend, where Wrax presently found his wife, having first learned that his home was in the possession of the enemy ; and telling her there was "nothing whatever to be alarmed about," he positively wanted her to go home and cook supper for those bailiffs ! What next, and next ? Zee told him, to his intense chagrin, "that she would not enter the house again until she knew those men had gone." They had surprised her in the midst of cooking operations ; there were any number of apple puffs for them to gobble up, so they would *not* starve. Having assured themselves that the bill of sale was duly registered, they decamped. Wrax then

sought his wife, and rudely intimated that she could return home by throwing the house-key towards her; and then, without a word, went his way, a bad one, of course. No greater offence could be offered him than that outsiders should doubt whether he was absolute Czar in his own house. He sulked awhile, but came round of his own accord. Zee made no attempt to let him down easy, as she was too prone to do.

Zee had now a garden, and she was the busy bee; she had pure clay on which to spend her surplus energies; but even clay is so grateful for sun and shower, that with a little courting, it bubbles up in blessings. Her garden, the admiration of neighbors, was the work of her own hands, and husbands held Zee up to their wives as a model. Remembering how often she had been diverted from low-thoughted cares, and reminded of the all-pervading presence of goodness unseen, but everywhere felt, by unexpectedly inhaling the fragant mignonette in this and that fair garden, she planted it profusely in her own, that it might be a glad good morning to the downcast, to whom its sweetness is specially sweet. So blythely indeed did the pretty flowers hold up their heads that Zee went to them for kisses, Wrax's were sparse, you know; besides it isn't pleasant to kiss a beer barrel.

Having been successful in her budding operations she now grows her own peaches, and although they have not quite reached the melting deliciousness of the delicately nurtured hot-house peach, it is pleasant, nevertheless, to lie under the trees and let the luscious fruit drop into your mouth almost. Of peaches one can eat to repletion, and repeat the dose at least three times a day with renewed enjoyment. And if you, reader, in due season (March and April), should pop in on Zee without ceremony, she will bid you pluck for yourself from trees of her own planting, or set before you a basket of blooming peaches and bid you eat without stint; nor shall white man or Maori dash the peach nectar from your lips.

Disregarding the injunction, "Keep your hands from picking and stealing," in her haste to stock her waste ground, Zee, naughty Zee, in conjunction with a friend

planting a garden likewise, who like Zee was denied the pleasure of purchasing plants, etc.—neither lady possessing pin-money—they together begged, borrowed, and—yes, it must be written—stole, stole flowers, slips, etc., of no great value, and chiefly from government gardens—still they stole. There was no luck in it, a guilty spirit bending over the flowers withered them all up. Their picking-and-stealing exploits were performed in broad daylight, and boastfully recounted; they were wrong, nevertheless. Eve's daughters, both ladies! And Zee, at least, who never perhaps committed a meaner, less excusable action, learned, as she never did before, how easy it is to fall, if one permits oneself to hanker after any "forbidden" thing; and the lesson has made her less severe towards the erring than she otherwise might have been. Covet nothing but goodness. Keep the conscience clear respecting mine and thine. Dare to be poor with honor, and patiently wait till good times come.

Then Zee felt and saw only the mortification to pride which makes wrong-doing a hard road to travel; now she rises superior to the humiliation, and with all the energy of which she is capable, sets to work to mend her ways. And, incomprehensible though it appear to those who have not yet begun to form their own minds, she is never more thankfully happy than when she has to bite the dust on her own account; not that she rejoices in her sins, but in the wisdom they bring. Her conceit and selfishness are vulnerable; every wrong word and deed comes home to roost. Of a truth, the orthodox devil is less black than he's painted; Zee never shelters behind the devil; she knows her sins are her own, not his.

Zee's bride friend of the ship, Gilpin-like, "no holiday had seen" since she started in quest of wedded love in a bush cottage some two years past; and as business would take Wrax from home for awhile, Zee resolved to make one long gala day of his absence by inviting the lady aforesaid to a process of rejuvenation *in town*, lest she should become seedy and moth-eaten *by* overmuch rustication. Her wants were few and *simple*, or Zee would have shrunk from exposing her

sparsely-furnished larder; good spirits would keep them jubilant; they were indifferent to good cheer. Happiness was consequent on the life each led, not something to be sought after; difficulties, hardship, drudgery, were words without meaning to them. There would be no complaining in our streets if men and women were like that lady, whose lot has been singularly hard, notwithstanding her native shrewdness and untiring energy. She is none too well mated.

She came, and laughed, and conquered; after having spent a week or two with Zee, as quietly as pleasantly, the lady was now visiting a mutual friend, with whom Zee, too, proposed spending a day; and wending her way thitherward she called at the post-office for letters, the English mail having arrived (at this date, be it known, the suburbs of Auckland possess two postal deliveries daily). The deep border to one of her letters advised her to meet death within. Who could it be? She was apprehensive of danger to no one, although amid the circle of her blood-relations were counted several shocks of corn fully ripe. Hastening to meet the blow she broke the seal and read. O Zee! a stroke of the pen had blotted out the sun, and she groped her way amid gathering darkness. The first to keep, the last to lose; the best beloved was gone—gone! His love had been a benediction; possessing it she was rich, but he had taken it to heaven with him, and left her poor indeed. What could she do, where could she go? She hadn't courage to turn back to her desolate home.

"What's the matter?" queried her friends in alarm, when Zee presented herself. The letter told them all; they had heard enough of the lost friend, Wrax's eldest brother, to know that Zee's loss was irreparable. She covered up her wound for the time being; but oh, how oppressive was her sense of loneliness on returning to her home at night; the bitterness of death must be passed alone, and she could but cry: "My brother, O my brother, would God I had died for thee!" Loving him for his own sake, not for what he had done for her, much though that had been, her love for him enriched, ennobled her; it could not die; he was still *her wisdom* and strength, life itself almost. Having

formed no close ties of his own, he was free to bless Zee, whose dearth of domestic affection called his native kindliness into active exercise ; they would have been to each other just brother and sister of the ordinary type had Wrax been what he ought to have been ; but Zee's poverty and isolation, coupled with her untiring efforts to rise above them, pleaded irresistibly with a heart brave and manly as his. The purest, most unselfish, most cultured man Zee had as yet ranked among her friends.

Rex, too, lost his all in the death of that uncle, whose loving interest in the boy was scarcely less than in the mother, who sorrowed on the boy's account even more than on her own, perhaps. Glad to have loved, though she had lost, she was thankful to be at the Antipodes. England's glory had departed until she could turn herself round and take a fresh look at life. Never till then did she know how much she owed that brother ; no cloud ever came between them ; she holds his love in everlasting remembrance ; he was the only man who had stirred to its depths her strong woman's heart. With all a woman's tenderness he was yet one of the bravest of men ; it is not given to one person, perhaps, to know two such men in a lifetime. What a contrast the brothers presented, the eldest and youngest sons of the same parents ; and being the youngest child of thirteen, fair to look upon (as, indeed, were the entire family, the parents themselves are said to have been "the handsomest couple that ever entered H——y church") and of good parts, Wrax was "spoilt" to some extent—trained to weakness, not strength.

The brother's last conscious thought was of Zee, and to secure her happiness he hastened to forward £350 to release other property of Wrax on which the mortgagee was compelled to foreclose in consequence of the ever-deepening commercial stagnation. Thus his last generous act, for Zee's sake alone and on her representation, saved Wrax from the ruin which a second time threatened to overtake him. That brother's generosity soothed, not wounded ; the recipient, not himself, conferred the favor.

Another great sorrow for Zee to bear, and it was

borne so as to make peacefully happy the months of Wrax's absence, concerning whom "out of sight" meant "out of mind," and that was happiness enough for Zee, who hadn't much to glory in. Her house, moreover, stood alone; and having no cat, the hermit was pleased with the company of a real, live mouse, since for days together in the rainy season she had no opportunity of exchanging a word with any one except, perhaps, the milkman or baker. Even men have remarked to her: "I could not live alone as you do;" and her answer always was: "You haven't been broken in, as I have."

Never before had the meal and oil so nearly failed, or famine looked so ugly as when her cousin one day popped in upon her to take "pot-luck"; the pot was there, the luck was missing; and Zee was "too much the broke" in confessing that she had not a particle of meat, butter, or sugar in the house, nor a penny wherewith to buy them. The "skeleton" explained everything; the cousin was not much surprised, and gulping down his indignation, he seized his hat, jerked himself off, and ere long returned with necessaries for a jollification. Her cupboard, however, would not have been "bare" had she possessed second sight; for a letter for her from Wrax had been lying at the post-office for days containing a whole pound note! How rich she must have felt, and glad too, that he had not forgotten her. He himself professed to be "hard up;" still he contrived to exist somehow.

CHAPTER XVI.

WOUNDED SELF-LOVE.

IT will surprise no one to hear that Zee, independent in thought as she undoubtedly was, should have run foul of Church dignitaries. A thinking man is bad enough, but where can pains and penalties be found for that monstrosity, a thinking woman? Wounded self-love, and it alone, is responsible for the bitter persecutions that have disgraced the Church in all ages. Church dignitaries are nearly all of one type—small and narrow—and clearly prove how little faith they have in their own faith the instant an attack is made upon it.

Zee would fain be painted blacker than she is by nature rather than her faults should be glossed over. And those who noted the fire-flash of her eye at wrongs endured or threatened by anyone might have deemed her eager to quarrel, but she was not; estrangement pained her deeply. She could hold her own against any number of such men as she met with in those days, which is really saying very little; and despite her heretical proclivities she had thus far glided along with her few Church friends very pleasantly, often making the room and the hour full of music as she played, in a bantering way, with men, women, and ghosts; amusing, not wounding.

She, however, richly deserved what follows for having allowed herself to be betrayed, unwittingly it is true, into Church membership; all overtures thereto, many and pressing, she had persistently resisted until, caught again in a trap, she became "one of us;" she resisted the oft-repeated solicitation to membership because, chiefly, she could not bear to seem to sever herself from Wrax, and, farther, because she believed

the flock (whose religion consisted in singing and praying merely, being not one whit better than the outside world) looked best at a distance, where the ravages of the roaring lion were less visible. All went well, nevertheless, until the powers above her tried to make black look white, then they found Zee one too many for them. There was a scheme afloat of converting three exceedingly "lean-kine" churches into one decent congregation, and minister and deacons soon became as unscrupulous as determined to carry their point.

And ministers and deacons brought butter in a lordly dish to their somewhat refractory lambs at the various mild dissipations got up for the amalgamation occasion in the form of united prayer-meetings and united tea-fights (not so bad the latter). As "one of us" light was soon let in on Zee's darkness, and she found that the "roaring lion" had been so busy among the lambs that each separate congregation looked askance at the other, notwithstanding that in the customary gold-leaf plausibility an attempt was made, with tiresome iteration, to prove that each church possessed precisely the virtues the other lacked, and united could not fail to make a glorious whole, a happy family.

But the saints didn't see it; the butter was wasted; there were those unsatisfied grudges in the bosom of each church (wounded self-love again), and flummery wouldn't heal them. Besides, in the union of three bankrupt churches at almost their last gasp, the saints could see only deeper debt, notwithstanding that the interested heads of the firm talked against time in their desire to make the saints see that the sores, whatever they were, belonged to the old boards of the old meeting-houses, not to the people at all; the boards, and the boards alone perpetuated the said jealousies, but in the proposed fine new building smiling peace would reign around.

But Zee drew a line at the boards; she could not swallow the boards, the wickedness of those old boards! No doubt rivers of tears ran down the face of those old boards in damp weather under all they had to bear. She had a tender feeling for the boards, and objected

to their being "put upon;" possibly her Christian regard was as strong for them as for those whose sins they had to bear. The pretty by-play within the sacred walls being over, the naughty lambs after the meeting, knowing there was not one spark of religion in the whole affair—that it was considered a "good spec," and nothing more—would form themselves into laughing knots without the building, and ask of each other: "Do those men really think they have gulled us?" Zee suggested that since the new chapel had such a prodigious work of regeneration to perform (the need of regeneration was incidentally admitted) it should be christened Bleeding Heart Bethel, that its windows should be frosted with love's silvery light, that love's incense should overshadow it like a cloud, enfolding at once the aged sinner and the youthful saint in its magnetic embrace.

Apt to express herself roundly on crooked designs in general, she was no worse than her neighbors in her discussion of the amalgamation question; but she had the misfortune to be quoted, and misquoted possibly; and presently found herself, to her intense disgust, closeted by his request with the senior deacon, who had been deputed by the lords in council, *i.e.*, minister and deacons, to obtain from her, and transmit in writing, a confession of "what she had said on the amalgamation question." Zee asked to confess! her pride was aflame in an instant, and, Topsy-like, she would have "'fessed" too much, had time been given her to think by "Miss Phely" in the form of the senior deacon, the king of the little chapel by reason of the cabalistic letters, £ s. d., attaching to his name in a longer measure than to any other member. Zee did not plead guilty, rest assured; she had not uttered one word more than the case warranted, and if truth proves unpalatable it is not truth's fault. "Miss Phely" found, to his chagrin, that he could make no impression on Zee—in fact, she defied him.

And the reader will guess what followed. Minister and deacons, in awful conclave, agreed that Zee had "hurt their feelings," poor dears! and forwarded to her a resolution to that effect, couched in the orthodox

"Christian regards" and "Christian spirit," etc. Deeming it an unprovoked insult, Zee tore up the resolution, enclosed it in an envelope, and returned it to them through their secretary—defied them all. Worse and worse!

Ye lords in council, think of it! The throne of infallibility defied by a woman—take breath! It is impossible to paint her black enough. May the grass speedily grow on her grave, when once the "steel collar" of blessed memory has wrung her neck! The savage order of Philistines detest the innate strength of mind which, refusing to compromise with conscience, defies power, scorns fear, and rises superior to petty self-interest.

It is enough to say, that Zee was finally blackballed with the usual floss and gloss of "Christian regard" and "Christian spirit" by her persecutors, a few men possessing irresponsible power, who lorded it over the consciences of others.

How could they throw a stone at Zee? They knew how quietly and well she had trod her thorny road, how heavy was the cross she had to bear, made so much the heavier by the then recent death of her beloved brother-in-law. But what was all that set over against wounded self-love? Self-love in action is the devil of devils this world has to fight.

There was not one particle of superstition in Zee—she knew what those men and their opinions were worth; but alive in every inch of her body as she was, the very prominence the affair occasioned was in itself painful. It caused a disruption in the Church, after several members had been dragged on to the boards of the Star-chamber. Indeed, it was a stupid farce. Zee did well to resist such tyranny, and religion gains, not loses, by its exposure; but its "beggarly elements"—lying and hypocrisy, all too common in the professing world—receive, and rightly, a severe blow from exposure.

Bad as was Wrax's own conduct, he had not fallen low enough to stand by and allow other men to browbeat his wife. The whole proceedings roused his fiercest indignation, and brought his better nature into

being, as, taking the disgraceful matter up earnestly, he had it published in pamphlet form and widely circulated, thus of course giving great offence to Zee's persecutors, who could not utter one word in self-defence, though challenged to do so.

Once admitted into any little sect, one is in danger of becoming hopelessly fossilised. Forging fetters for the intellect by deferring too much to tradition, men tremble before fresh thought, fearing a soul-destroying tendency in everything that does not dovetail with popular orthodoxy—orthodoxy that has sadly caricatured the Christ-Savior, by pandering to the depraved tastes of the hour, instead of giving a lofty moral tone to society—pandering until many men are found, as coolly as complacently, biting the dust of self-abasement so long as it is gold-dust, and crawling very like worms so long as they fancy they have God upon the boards. Drawing saintly lines about their faces, on state occasions they beseech God to come before the curtain to receive their plaudits, and listen to their mock lamentations over sins but too successful on 'change. Yes, thinking to get behind God's back to do their dirty work, they have gone up to the Temple for purification, *i.e.*, a dispensation to do as they like ; then returned to their sins with double relish. Is this fact, or is it not ?

The Church row was a good thing for Zee : all good gravitates towards the true-hearted, though it come by a zig-zag road. It was the goodness of God, not the wrath of man, that drove her out of that little sect ; a better home had been prepared for her, and grateful to any and every means by which good lessons are learnt, Zee thenceforth began slowly—all good things are slow of growth—to live in a truer sense than she had done before.

From then till now she has listened to the teaching of Samuel Edger, B.A., of London University, from whom she has received almost every thought that has made life precious, and well worth the living ; to whom she would lovingly dedicate this book if certain that he would esteem it a compliment. No one may know what Zee would have become had she such a teacher in

early life, and those whose minds have been formed by him ought to be in every respect immeasurably superior to those who have had such teachers as Zee has had.

The being denounced by name from the pulpit of York Cathedral for proving, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that other things being equal, *sense has no sex*, was perhaps the highest honor ever conferred upon the womanly, unconventional "Mary Somerville." The beings whose names are reverenced to this hour were troublesome characters to orthodoxy, rest assured. Orthodoxy believes only what it sees; for instance, Mrs. Elizabeth Fry was by no means a cream-cheese, pat-o'-butter sort of woman. No, in all probability she would have been turned out of every sect-church save that of the Friends; and by making room for mind, regardless of sex, the Friends help to rub off the angularities of character, masculine and feminine. With such noble women Zee presumes to claim no relationship beyond the faithful, daily offering up self as soil in which virtues are fated to grow, because she patiently cultivates them.

The religion of the future must be the antipodes of such cant as the above Church squabble represents; it must command the heart as well as the head, a head, too, worth calling a head, if it is to have any hold on the affections of the people. It must be a religion of personal goodness, strong to rebuke, to love, to save—to save *from* sin not *to* sin. Love is the only lever which can make the pearls of individual and national character shine resplendently in contrast with the insipidity of inanity prevailing. Love makes God's thoughts and ways the candle in the window inviting the wanderer's return. Love is the laughing-eyed heartsease and mignonette that gladden the desolate heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

His Goods and Chattels.

ZEE knew that her boy was by no means deficient in intellect, even if he should fail to carry off all the apples from the tree of knowledge; and having passed his term of years at school with honor, as a "thoroughly conscientious, biddable youth" (sweet words from stranger lips to the anxious mother), Rex sighed for his Auckland home with so intense a longing, that Zee with much trepidation consented to his return. She trembled lest the father should insensibly lead the son astray, by insinuating doubts calculated to undermine all virtue, and the strongest faith in the honor and probity of other men. Corrupt in himself, Wrax was likely to become an element of corruption to others; hence it would be hard for Rex to steer clear of rocks and quicksands in choosing between father and mother as to whose principles of action he should adopt, especially as Zee had from his earliest years instilled in him a child-like reverence for his father, that would preclude the possibility of his seeing him as he really was.

Never, however, did school-girl count the hours to the "break up" more joyously than Zee counted Rex's allotted sea-days, when once she knew him to have started on his homeward track. And soon a friend, at some personal inconvenience, sounded the joy-tocsin: "She's come!" alluding to the vessel, as she sailed grandly up the harbor, on a Sunday, according to custom. And Sunday though it was, Zee knew that He who justified the plucking of an ear of corn on that day would give the hungry mother-love its ear of corn too. For on Zee devolved the happy task of welcoming the boy home, Wrax being prostrate, recovering

from one of his attacks of gout, to which epilepsy had long since added its horrors, and the fits having seized him more than once in a public-house, his death had been reported again and again; but he possessed the fabled nine lives of a cat.

Zee flew to the wharf, took a boat, and was quickly alongside the vessel; and there stood the stripling in excellent health, and oh so glad to have reached home, sweet home! Wrax must go forth to meet his boy, and with great effort the poor gouty toes carried him a few paces from his own door, when the sight of mother and son gladdened his vision. How pleased he was to see the tall fellow, the picture of health, fast running to manhood! And what a charming picture they made round the tea-table that night! Zee had had her boy in her eye so long that her modest larder was equal to the occasion. A change of food, even the simplest, is sweet after a long voyage.

Subdued by suffering and gratitude, Wrax was seen to the best advantage; indeed, Rex's return appeared most opportune; he touched the tenderest chord in the father's heart, and all the father asserted itself as Wrax, with tears of intense pain, traced his downward course without daring to offer the slightest excuse for himself. Yes, hot were the tears he shed, bitter his self-reproach as, in reviewing his worse than wasted life, he pointed to breakers ahead with a pathos, admired, never imitated, unless by one who has drunk to the dregs of the same cup of misery. Laying down rules many and wise for his future guidance, good and good only were the counsels he gave his boy, vowing solemnly he should never again have cause to blush for his father, that he would help him up the ladder of life, not drag him to ruin, and so forth.

How kind, too, and gentle he was to Zee; positively asked her to read the Bible aloud when they retired for the night. She fell on her knees beside him and they wept together. The turning-point had come at last. Wrax was a young man still, he would redeem his character and position. Their sky was full of gimlet-holes that let the glory through, as the trio rejoiced in the prospect of a good time. Sincere, whilst the fit

lasted, he was virtuous only so long as vice was impossible to him; no sooner had he bidden adieu to the sick couch and gained strength to walk so far than he hastened to meet his mortal foe at the public-house. Having cleared his conscience and brain by tears and good resolutions, his baser self held possession of the house newly swept and garnished. No thought of his boy restrained the guilty man; and the sensitive Rex shrank with loathing from being known as his father's son. As for Zee, sky-scraping Zee, she had much better have nursed Wrax for the grave than for the public-house. Depend upon it that the man who is strong to do wrong, to defy all the laws of God and man, is strong to do the right *if he will.*

Having everything to fear and nothing to hope from his father, the brave Rex, with indomitable perseverance, seized fortune by the forelock, and in cutting his way to manhood, he inch by inch bearded lions by the way which would have been less formidable to a less finely-strung nature. The kind Father, however, never fails to shut the mouths of the lions to incorruptible Daniels.

Rex had left the fat of veal and sheep a long way behind him; his mother and he kept Lent beyond all reasonable bounds. They scraped, Wrax spent. Their dinner was of potatoes and salt often, and not a bad one either, with hunger for sauce. What cared they though they went to bed supperless to a thorny bed? being together they could and did laugh and make light of it, living in an ideal paradise the while. But they never pretended to see the justice of one man having it in his power thus to blast their prospects. The mention of one feast must not be omitted. A fine large apple having been given to Zee she made a pudding of it for six o'clock dinner, and she was eating that pudding for Rex all day long in anticipation; it was such a treat! Pies and puddings have become common enough long since then, but Zee will never forget that apple-pudding while she has being; it was so delicious.

It goes against the grain to have to owe everything to relatives, whilst belonging to a man who ought to

have enough and to spare, let who would perish from hunger. Not one penny had Wrax contributed towards the expenses incurred on Rex's account, nor had it been expected; but it would have made mother and son the happier had he done so. And relatives still supplied their wants in money's worth, seldom in money, for they knew it always found its way into Wrax's pocket. With a meanness quite in keeping with his every act, Wrax always opened his wife's letters if they fell first into his hands. And opening a letter from Merlee to Zee, enclosing a P.O. for £5, Wrax was of course aware of her possession of that sum; and whether or not he was on his best behavior in consequence, it is hard to tell; but he was good for several successive days, when he exclaimed involuntarily, as it appeared, after Rex had left home for business: "What a pity! I see a fine chance of doing a good stroke of business if I had but a little ready money." Nothing could, of course, be farther from his thoughts than the "little ready money" in his wife's possession.

The stupid Zee at any rate never suspected he had a design upon it, an old trick though it was. She knew no personal wants so long as no debts pressed upon her; they were out of debt by this time, or the money would have been handed over to a creditor. Inwardly weighing the pros and cons of the question, Zee thought, what are £5 to me? I'll give him another chance, to trust him may do him good. So she said: "Here is the money Merlee sent, if it will be of any use."

"Of the greatest possible use!" returned Wrax, as he pocketed the money with glad alacrity, and made off with all speed for the "good stroke of business." And happy Zee was on stilts all day. Experience belied her trust, yet believing he would make a good use of the money, she never whispered one word to the contrary, she was only glad to have had it to give him; and knowing how grateful she was herself for the smallest kindness, she judged he could not be otherwise than grateful. If he came at all he was more punctual at meal times than of old, and not a

single misgiving clouded Zee's brow till six o'clock came and no Wrax, when a slightly perceptible tremor began to creep round about that foolishly-trusting heart of hers. Rex could be depended upon, and when he appeared his mother, half ashamed, told him what she had done, and shyly her fears found utterance in the dreadful words: "He won't go and get drunk with it, will he?" The boy's whole soul kindled with generous enthusiasm as he replied: "Ah no, I'm sure he won't. He'll be here directly."

Seven o'clock, eight o'clock came and went, but no Wrax, and mother and son began to look at each other with sickening apprehension. A lumbering is presently heard on the doorsteps, then a knock at the door. A policeman, if you please, with Wrax dead drunk! Much good Zee's money had done him! It was by no means the first time he had been brought home in a similar plight. By way of apology for bringing him to the door, the policeman said: "He fell down twice after I put him in at the gate, so I thought I had better bring him along."

The £5 enabled Wrax to involve himself in fresh difficulties, that was all, and he drinking hard the while. Being drunk at the time, he one day put £5 into his wife's hand, saying: "I've been robbed. Take care of this, it is for so and so on such a date. Mind that." Believing his vile habits were the only "robbers," Zee resolved he should never touch that money again, and forthwith gave it into the safe custody of a friend. She is growing wiser, you see, and has now taken her first bold and unquestionably right step, prepared to suffer the consequences, even should her life pay the forfeit. Early in the morning of the given date, Wrax asked, unsuspectingly, for the money, and the reader can perhaps imagine better than words can convey Wrax's amazement when Zee told him she would herself put the money to the use for which he intended it, as she did later in the day.

Wrax defied at last! Defied by his wife, too! His rage was frightful to witness on finding that Zee would neither give him the money nor tell him where it was; he swore, ground his teeth savagely, and tore about

like the madman he was, and uttered appalling threats against Zee, who knew she had acted rightly for once. Still, to defy a parson and a swarm of deacons, with their milk-and-water piety, was child's play to defying the tyrant Wrax. Zee was very quiet, not cowed, resolved to stand firm to the death; and Wrax's roar gathered intensity day by day, till at last he shouted: "I have given instructions to"—naming an auctioneer—"to sell every stick and stone belonging to me, and your clothing too, madam. Not a blessed thing will I leave you, beyond what you stand upright in. And if you don't mind what you're about, I'll sell the gown off your back and the shoes off your feet." Oh, infamous law that gives the husband such power; the husband who will give, yield nothing! and, oh, infamous lie! that fiction of the imagination: "with all my worldly goods I thee endow." His threats were well larded, as usual, with imprecations too exquisite for repetition; but as he was lavish of such attentions, Zee took no notice whatever of his threats till she discovered incidentally that he had blazoned abroad both his fancied grievance and his purposed revenge.

She then consulted with friends as to what had best be done in the event of his putting his threats into execution. The house properties she had twice saved would have to go, of course; but it was arranged that her clothing and the furniture should be bought in; and since she was that degraded thing, a wife, and could hold nothing, absolutely nothing in her own name, her clothing and furniture should be held for her benefit by the gentleman who bought them.

Thus prepared for the worst, Zee hoped Wrax would sell, that she might secure her household goods, which she feared, not without reason, would vanish one by one. Driven to such an extremity, Zee would have left Wrax for ever; what she had borne and done had been to no purpose. His threats proved, after all, just bluster, nothing more. The storm blew over, of course; but it serves to show the man he was. Wrax, in common with his kind, whose every word is an implied insult to woman, really believed that he had complimented Zee in electing her to be his slave, and

that she ought to be deeply sensible of the honor put upon her! And the notion that he must be a bear in his own house to keep up his dignity, together with his ever-increasing irrascibility, made his naturally imperious temper almost unbearable in ordinary circumstances; so that to stretch a point proved the one straw too much, and when Zee had to take him down, she did it effectually; but he rose to the surface again. It was a thorny road he made for himself at every turn, and he loved it merely because it was of his own making; but in venting his ill-humor on his wife, he made it appear as if he resented the affection existing between mother and son; or it may be that in having some one to fall back upon, Zee was more conscious alike of her own weakness and of Wrax's unkindness than when she had no prop.

Rex is now, and ever has been, his mother's joy and pride, and she has much reason to rejoice in his home-coming. With his decided preference for colonial life it would have been a mistake to have opposed his return to it, despite the perils to which, possessed of less strength of mind and of purpose, he might have been exposed. His best friend having passed away, the boy had not room to breathe in England. His mother's boy to the centre of his soul, happy and industrious, he possesses, not unnaturally, the strongest possible antipathy to drink in all its forms, as also a dislike, scarcely less pronounced, to the sordid love of money. Simple pleasures, fireside pastimes, are all the recreation healthy tastes need; and mother and son were such home-birds they almost grudged an hour spent beyond its precincts until Rex, a bachelor still, choosing for himself the discipline of a rough untried path, launched his own lifeboat on time's glad sea.

Dignity! who can maintain the dignity of the man who cannot maintain his own dignity? Wrax gradually sunk so low that Zee dared not trust him with money. He would cheat in every conceivable way to obtain money for drink. Giving him various sums of money for the disbursement of certain bills, and accepting his word as to the receipts, she found, to her consternation, on the bills being sent in a second time,

that he had appropriated the moneys; hence, for his credit's sake, no less than for her own, she was compelled to tell their tradespeople that they must not trust him on any pretext whatever.

Then, too, he had sold or raffled so many articles of value, that Zee was urged to put her silver away for safety. But she could not bear to show distrust; besides, some of it was in daily use, and no substitute would have escaped the watchful jealousy of the artful Wrax. No, she trusted him through it all, and he never, to her knowledge, made away with anything that was not strictly speaking his own. Little, indeed, is the time he spends in his home; he just occupies a bedroom, little more, and ludicrous in the extreme is his manner of whisking out of sight; he has jumped out of window not infrequently, and slipped through the key-hole, Zee declares, so mysteriously has he spirited himself away. And he skulked; not because he was afraid of his wife, no, he would have smashed every door and window in the house rather than have submitted to coercion, nor would she attempt to coerce; he skulked because he was ashamed of himself; he knew Zee was better than he was, which is not saying much, and it is hard to sin against goodness.

In justice to Wrax it ought, perhaps, to be mentioned that he was not wholly insensible to her worth, however doubtful appeared his appreciation. In speaking of her when she was in England, without the slightest expectation of its reaching her ears—such a chance would have silenced his lips—he said to the wife of one of his boon companions: "A better woman never breathed;" and sparse of praise as was Wrax, those few words prove that she still occupies the topmost height of whatever reverence he may cherish for her sex. That he could treat her as he has done, even while she commanded his sometimes undisguised respect, proves at once how entirely drink unmans a man, and how helplessly hopeless with him would have been the life of a woman less daring than was Zee.

For even she, driven to desperation by his jeers and derisive sneers, as he twitted her with his absolute power over her, saying: "Go where you will, you can-

not escape me," has implored him on her knees to kill her at one blow rather than subject her to the living death she endured. But such generosity was impossible to him. Loving death better than life (his "life" is death to all that makes life worth living for), he is free to pursue it, but his right to do wrong begins and ends with himself; he ought not to be at liberty to deal death to others. To his feverish dreams of bliss —his heaven while they last—he is, however welcome as far as Zee is concerned, they are little enough for the penalty involved, for a man more hopelessly degraded can scarcely be found. Hope of his reformation there is none (except that he has given up the pipe to which he was once a slave), and the separation between man and wife is as complete as sin can make it. He drinks and drinks till he loathes the sight and smell of intoxicants; then he abstains and friend gout comes to his relief, and his system, recovering its tone, enables him to cast himself afresh with manifest enjoyment at the feet of the only god he worships—Bacchus.

Open to flattery, his mad infatuation disposes him to trust those only of like tastes to himself; hence, inheriting at his mother's death a sufficient sum to have secured a life-long competency, the snakish colonel this and captain that relieved him of almost all of it, borrowing it on the "honor of a gentleman"—"honor" evaporating the instant the money was clutched; neither the promised exorbitant interest (the bait swallowed), the "honor," nor the money, has since been heard of. And as to how much money Wrax quaffs in his cups with Cleopatra-like prodigality, it were vain to surmise; his bank, therefore, may break all too soon, for friend gout may keep him in the body for many a year.

Every limb of the poor, ill-used body is more or less deformed by rheumatic gout, and his periodic sufferings are frightful. Now, as the years roll on, he has reached the lowest phase of vice—the more he drinks the less brusque and churlish is his manner; left to himself he is very quiet, indeed he is pitifully abject in his moral negation. So hideous, too, is the impress vice has stamped upon him, as the passions indulged

have used up the fire of his nature, that he looks *demented;* the wreck left cannot in any sense be called a man, and Zee carefully avoids looking him in the face, the sight is too dreadful. And yet, if she were legally free to-morrow (she asks not freedom for herself) she would not cast him off; his very desolation ("happiness" he calls it) draws on her compassion, and she longs to catch the death-note of repentant gladness he will assuredly utter, if a moment's warning be given to him. Still, it is a small matter how a man goes out of the world; if he repent, when he can do no less, the less said about it the better.

It is well that nothing is required of him, for he is utterly incapable of business. A few nights since he returned home much disfigured by the "gravel-rash!" purchased, he presumed to say with bombast, "In defence of my Queen and my country." But the kerbstone was his Fenian antagonist. His attempted jokes and smiles are the saddest part of his very sad case; and yet he makes himself quite agreeable at home now occasionally. All hope of his reformation having quite died out of her heart, Zee has long ceased to remonstrate with him; hence, in reference to his habits, Rex with some youthful indignation has said to Zee: "You are as sweet to him in the morning as if he went to bed all right." Exactly so; she has learnt *that it is not ours to punish,* but to reform, where reform is possible.

With more of pain than of reproach she has told Wrax how unkind appeared his unwillingness to do anything for her, even in sickness, and it has done him good. Once or twice, of late, if she has ailed sufficiently to claim a slight indulgence, Wrax has risen at a word to make her a cup of tea, toasted bread to perfection, or cut wafers of bread-and-butter, and has gone to the nest for the freshest of eggs, serving it on the neatly laid breakfast-tray in approved style. So proud has he been of the opportunity of waiting on his wife, that if she has not been quite up to the mark he has actually tried to persuade her to have her breakfast in bed that he might have the pleasure of supplying her wants. The Wrax of other days has, indeed, passed

away. In such moments Zee felt every inch a queen; such kindness made the past sorrow seem lightsome; delightful even. It was well to draw upon it, to exhibit his better-self to his famished vision—"My poor old boy," as she calls him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ZEE HAS EARNED THE RIGHT TO MAKE HER VOICE HEARD.

"The true poet, to-day, is God's prophet;
If a singer prove false to his trust,
Make his mission a by-word and scoff it,
'Tis meet he should sink into dust.

Who would wear the life-crown of the poet
Must breathe out a soul in his art—
Stand above the rude throng, not below it;
And his song must be pure, like his heart."

MEN, brothers, Christians! Be consistent! Make the tree good and its fruit good, or the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt. If vice is inherent in human nature, as the "total-depravity" dogma teaches, if strength is found in licentiousness alone, it is absurd to attempt to stamp it out; if any vice is necessary all vice is necessary. Now when or where can its proud waves be stayed? If men are to think and drink as suits them, and the drink makes its devotees wise, strong, industrious, loving, gentle; better husbands and wives, better fathers and mothers, better friends and citizens—in short, if "virtue is vice nick-named," by all means let the harlot, the drunkard, the libertine, rule. If there is no God, no heaven, no hell, give vice a fair field; let it override and choke all that is misnamed "good." Drink means drunkenness clearly. Well, let men think and drink as suits them; and add to these virtues adultery, murder, theft, lying, cursing, and all the other graces found in combination with a much-vaunted revenue from the gay and lightsome gin-palace. Yes, "overturn, overturn, overturn," till the earth is drunk with the blood of those now called "saints."

Exhibit the giants who have grown strong on the temptations the liquor traffic affords. Prove satisfactorily that to be magnificently vile, to do precisely as one likes regardless of consequences, is right and good, that villany of deepest dye is unalloyed happiness, and any number of women, whose courage and capabilities are equal to any demand, will become as Catherine de Medici in wickedness.

Verily bad men are gods, their wisdom is infinite. Give the Bible to the dogs; live for the hour, not for the years; goodness is all a sham. Unlawful wedlock is legalised. The animal passions are exalted and their gratification is the be all and the end all of existence. Oh, grandly, noble achievement of Victoria's reign. Make the tree yet more corrupt; permit the now heaving, now smouldering volcano of unbridled lusts to belch forth till the known world is ablaze with the glory that spurns all bounds, and shall ere long eclipse the sun of the moral firmament. Oh, yes, give loose rein to the passions, and the Bible to the dogs, till satiety puts the ring in their nose and pins them to her triumphal car.

Verily Christian England has made her national tree surpassingly beautiful. The birds of the air will not lodge in its branches, the beasts of the field will not lie down beneath its shade; so measureless are its all-embracing arms that the lip curls with incredulity when it is proposed to curb its onward sweep; and well the lip may curl so long as men are content to renew the vigor of its roots by the ceaseless pruning of its branches. The tree is known by its fruits; yes, take a good look at the giants that come under the benignant shadow of this stately Upas. Its fruits are good, yea, very good; it enervates youth, blasts middle-age, produces the mildew and decay, that makes the man of towering intellect, ere yet in his prime, totter to his fall a crumbling ruin—a ruin neither to be averted nor adorned by the clinging ivy of affection, but to be thrust ignominiously out of sight. Pretty giants indeed! Oh beautiful, blessed results of thinking, drinking, and doing as one likes! Honor is nothing, health *is nothing*, wealth is nothing, woman is less than

nothing; each and all shall go to swell the praises of man, and man alone, doing as he likes! It is well to throw all the might and majesty of the law around such noble doings.

Christian bishops can afford to smile at the drink-tyrant's reign, not so the untutored savage. Deploring alike its ravages among their people, and the facility with which the drink is obtained, notwithstanding that it is illegal to sell intoxicants to the natives, Maori chiefs, despising the Englishman's loved waipiro (stinking water), have prayed earnestly, and in due form, that "its fountain-springs shall be dried up." Oh, foolish prayer! Only an untaught Maori could expect an avowedly Christian government to value righteousness above gold—to banish the sordid worldliness that covets the drink-traffic gains.

And yet with all their gold and the gratification of the passions, who shall say that the wicked are happy? Their carriage is lofty, it is true; they would if they could sneer down all opposition. But stolen fruit is *not* sweet in the eating, however tempting it looks in the distance; mock-merriment deludes the thoughtless only. In quest of examples of absolute despair the mind turns involuntarily to the gin-palace and the theatre, whose votaries in their truer moments stand alone, dreadfully alone, and with no eye to pity; smother up out of sight their dearly-bought merriment. It must outrage Satan himself that the men, whom no trade can blacken, should be allowed to traffic in the ruin of their kind. The good, if good there are, need to be protected against the bad; but he who needs protection against woman is no man; and the trade that needs protection is no legitimate trade.

Look at facts! See things as they are and as they ought to be. Right and wrong, truth and falsehood, hold no communion, though they share the same bed and board. Honor and honor only, ever has, ever can, unite man and woman; the bond is violated the instant the heart becomes truant; and that almost no value attaches to the mere form of marriage is proved conclusively by the ease with which its responsibilities are evaded. If two beasts are penned together and one

displays vicious tendencies they are separated forthwith. And when purity innocently marries pollution, a healthy public opinion ought to declare, as does One above, it is a cheat and a lie, and let the woman go blameless. Purity and pollution cannot be left tied together in the bundle of life with impunity. Wrax and Zee were never married, were never *one* in any true sense, though a parson tied the knot securely enough. When sex is put down and the soul is put uppermost —and the soul is more cared for than its surroundings —every institution will be tested by its effects on the spirit of those concerned in it. Then, be consistent!

Christ-like goodness and truthfulness are all that is needed to make the tree of life "good"—to cut the tap-root of false assumption. To see things as they are and as they ought to be, will directly place them on a sounder footing by drawing the good and true of both sexes into closer, stronger, practical sympathy than has ever yet existed between them, and then the wronged and wretched will not appeal to them in vain. For all practical purposes there are plenty of good men and women in the world if the ripened will of the truest, built up on intelligent conviction, would but utilise the reforming forces at command; and for the sake of every child born and unborn, for the sake of all that is holiest and best in man and woman, and for the sake of all that is vilest in the vile to redeem it, these forces shall be utilised when once woman's God-given work to bless mankind is sufficiently appreciated in its height and depth and length and breadth to allow her to define clearly the line of demarcation between good and evil. Let the moral sun shine and show every fleck of moral filth; this is all that is necessary to revolutionise the world.

Yes, try it, and you will soon learn that the will, and the will alone, is wanted to grapple with existing evils; and so long as this want of will characterises the paltering timidity, amounting almost to imbecility, with which the line is now drawn between right and wrong, no right practical results will be arrived at. Neither poverty, vice, nor crime can be dealt with in detail; *reform* must go to the roots of each excrescence.

Wrax, the man of passions indulged, is a fair sample of the going man, who ought to go ; and Zee, unreasoning Zee, is an equally fair specimen of the going woman ; but rising phœnix-like from her ashes, she has caught the music of the spheres, hence her one word is Progress. She has lived the inner, hidden life at great cost, and her one agonising hope is that her experience may be useful in saving others from like blunders. What matters how painful the refining process if the world is saved thereby, since those only are truly blessed whose experience serves to open the eyes of the spiritually blind? Still vicarious suffering has its limits, and is of value only as its precious lessons are turned to good account.

A retrospective view of what she has suffered makes her wince even yet ; happily the burden was not present to the mind's eye all at once ; her troubles came singly and the day's strength with them ; it would have been better, nevertheless, for her peace of mind had she earlier learned that she suffered in others' stead, that she was to drink to the dregs of sorrow's cup, to take a stone out of a weak sister's path : that in electing her to suffer God had made her fitter and stronger to bear his yoke. Nothing but good did she ever receive at the hands of God ; there was no night, no frown skyward of the mercy-seat, for all was ever in view even when the powers of evil seemed leagued against her. And the more completely she loses herself in the wide, wide world of wrong and wretchedness, the more certain is she to meet her Lord ; a light surprises and she sings with rapture. Loving each and all without distinction—not for what they are, that were impossible, but for what they may become—Zee no longer offers up petitions for her poor lone self. For self, except that she may grow in soul-beauty, she has not one moment's concern ; all thought of self she leaves to God with blissful quiet.

Zee is, to all intents and purposes, at least twenty years younger than Wrax, and to see them side by side would convince the most sceptical on the subject that right-doing is health, happiness, beauty ; that wrong-doing is pain, shame, idiotcy. She is certainly a credit

to total abstinence. Looking blindly at life and its duties, as the witless Zee once did, it is doubtful whether she could have acted better than she then did, but she could do nothing for Wrax. She taught him to despise his own soul and hers by pandering to his conceit and selfishness—fulfilling the devil's injunction—do evil that good may come; the good never comes; thus the influence of her whole life was wrongly directed. To have given her soul in his soul's stead could not have saved him, because he had no desire to be saved *from sin;* hence sacrifice for its own sake, instead of being regarded as an amiable weakness, ought to meet with the severest reprobation.

Through all her grief Zee has lived her own strangely happy life, every day finding a fresh-gathered lily in her path. Rude health and its genial influences, but especially the mental wealth she has garnered all along the road, have placed her above the reach of commiseration. Sorrow has not seared her heart, though it has seamed her face and left on it a settled melancholy, as it does on the face of all, perhaps, who have seen God's wonders in the deep. The melancholy tells its own story so faithfully that she would do much to get rid of it, since she lays no claim no martyrdom. Indeed, she feels inwardly so beautiful that she is conscious of a painful revulsion of feeling if she chances to catch a glimpse of her face in the glass; she has never, in truth, become at home with her own features.

CHAPTER XIX.

TEN YEARS AFTER.

BLESSED sunshine! But few words are needed to tell that the sun shines—to tell that Wrax is a new man, so entirely new that to Zee he is more handsome now, within and without, than he ever was before. Many and various were the determining causes producing the desired result. The frequent recurrence of epileptic fits quite unnerved him, for one thing, and for another thing, Zee had grown desperate. Wrax having recovered from an attack of gout unusually severe and protracted, she told him, with unmistakeable emphasis, that, "if he went back to the drink again, she would never nurse him through another illness—never." A resolution she ought to have arrived at many years earlier.

During his long illness Wrax closely studied the Good Templar constitution; but Zee hoped nothing from that. She had so often trusted his professed repentance, that her whole soul—oh! and body, too—were alive with distrust, however successfully concealed. But, instead of returning to the public-house as usual, when able to walk that length, he announced his intention of becoming a Templar, and himself and wife joined the Order as soon as Wrax was equal to the effort; and, without one single lapse, he has faithfully served an eight years' apprenticeship to truth, honor, manliness; and this 24th of May, 1880, he stands forth a man. There never was a moment in his history that he could not, if he would, have stood as firmly as he has done for the past eight years—there never was a moment when he was less strong of head, of will, and of lungs; but the body is now a total wreck. To undo the past is impossible, but to redeem it his whole soul is pledged.

He has held for years, and still holds, a prominent and responsible position in the Templar Order with general satisfaction. Indeed, he has most completely won the confidence of his fellow-men—of those, at least, whose good opinion is worth possessing.

It was years before Zee could dare to entirely believe in and welcome the marvellous change in Wrax—not, indeed, until the old imperious temper reasserted itself, which, at its worst, was better than the demented creature he had become. Rank, very rank, was the soil Zee was ploughing, both within herself and in Wrax. Oh, how the vice-stumps, as old as one's being, resisted the uprooting. A deal of flesh came away with some of the stumps; but they yielded at length—then victory! It is heaven to know that progress is made—that Christ is "lifted up." Stump No. 1 was the difficulty Wrax ever found in comprehending a mine and thine between himself and wife. It was all and always mine—I am lord of all. Some additions having been made to their house, Wrax fixed a dozen hat and coat pegs in the lobby, and to the use of two at least of those pegs Zee, not unnaturally, felt herself entitled; but she was to have no peg, so if she presumed to hang her cloak on one of the many unoccupied pegs, Wrax invariably threw it down. Telling him quietly, but without effect, how selfish it was of him to do so, the next time he threw her cloak down, Zee, after much painful deliberation, served his coat (his best overcoat, the only one that chanced to be hanging on the pegs) precisely as he had served her cloak; and there lay the coat for days, and there she knew it might lie as far as Wrax was concerned; so as it was in the way, Zee placed it on the outside balustrade leading to the front door, and there it remained for weeks; so long, indeed, that Zee knew not when it disappeared. It had never once been mentioned between them; and at last Wrax took pity on the coat and brought it indoors, and thenceforward ceded the two pegs claimed by his wife, thus tacitly acknowledging himself to have been in the wrong. Bravo, Wrax!

Stump No. 2 hung likewise on the principle, so dear to Wrax, of: "What is yours is mine, and what is mine

is my own." Hence he fully expected to appropriate a legacy left to his wife some years since. But, although he was then to be trusted with money to any amount, he had not made a good use of Zee's money in the past. She therefore resolved he should have no more of it; and on finding that she preferred to exercise her own judgment in the use of it to giving it to him, Wrax's fury was so ungovernable that Zee, for the first time, proposed a judicial separation between them (he was strong enough at that time to stand alone), to which end she consulted a lawyer, to find that, since Wrax opposed the separation, and Zee was unable to swear that her life was in danger from his violence, the law would allow her nothing—absolutely nothing. She must leave him in full possession of everything. But she would not do that. She had not promised to "endow" him with her all; so, keeping tight hold of the legacy, she allowed Wrax's temper to cool off at pleasure.

On the strength of his "goods-and-chattels" creed, Wrax had often said to his wife: "I bought you." And it is certain he really did believe even then, in the possession of his reason, that he had bought her body and soul. Given an inch, he must take an ell. The law regards the wife as the property of the husband. Consequently all she might, could, would, or should possess — moral rights into the bargain — are the husband's also; so reasoned Wrax. But Zee knew that her soul was her own if she possessed nothing else; and believing herself to be responsible for its cultivation, she has endeavored of late years to educate herself. Slowly, in the teeth of all but unexampled difficulties respecting her powers of acquiring knowledge, a little light has dawned upon her dark soul, Wrax fiercely opposing her attempts at self-culture meanwhile.

Believing that they could "get on well enough without it," he has no less fiercely resisted inch by inch—on his wife's account, he fancied, no less, than on his own—Zee's method of training jointly their inner being. But, taking care that good sense should be her right-hand counsellor (better sense, at least, than Wrax

opposed), she has triumphed. Wrax has yielded the ground, more or less ungraciously it is true, still he has yielded, and has learnt at length that two heads are better than one—the hardest lesson married men have to learn, so jealous are many of them of their rights, trembling lest they should be infringed. But dignity is mere bounce, a soap bubble, unless supported by the quiet consistency of a beautiful life—then it is impregnable.

Giving rightful supremacy to the disciplined will makes everything possible to him. His "principles" now are no less steadfast than are his wife's, and, helpful of each other, the newly-wedded pair walk hand-in-hand and see eye to eye almost—mutual friends in the best sense. Careful only that her every word and deed shall appeal directly to Wrax's honor and conscience, Zee leaves *conviction to do its own work;* and it has done its work with marvellous results. He can now do justice to his own family each and all, and is devoted to his boy's interests with an enthusiasm almost unparalleled. Verily, Zee's faith has entirely removed the Wrax mountain. Wrax is no longer Wrax. Zee can speak of him now most sincerely as my *dear* old Wrax.

Templary has done much for him without doubt, and to its advancement husband and wife have given themselves heartily. The lodge meetings, affording a counter-attraction to the public-house, were of great use to Wrax, until the rowdy element within them disgusted him as it has disgusted Templary's best friends everywhere. Working for numbers rather than for principles, numbers have, of course, ruined the Order, and proved how unfit men are to be trusted with power. Yet trusted they must be in order to become fit, but it ought not to be possible for numbers to bear down the intelligence which has the good of the Order at heart. Yet so it is.

Worse punishment cannot be merited by the vilest of women than to become the property of the drunkard; he will perfect his reign of terror over her. But in mercy protect, defend the good wife; set her free to labor for herself and children; but do not, for pity's

sake, leave her to beat off her idle, dissolute husband. She is powerless alone. Or if, on being driven to leave him, she trusts to his professed repentance and returns to live with him, what then?

The drunkard's wife, on whom the curse of drunkenness—the worst of woman's wrongs—falls with crushing force, seeks not to be lionised; and in asking that her right to consideration be acknowledged, she may find herself nearer to the hearts of her more favored brothers and sisters than is imagined. She complains not of her daily toil, would shirk none of its duties; but she would be delivered from torture cruel as needless, from the stolid indifference, perhaps hate, of a brutalised, irresponsible man, who should shield and bless—the man on whose soul her long-suffering gentleness falls but to harden, because the strong are protected against the weak by the strength of law and an unhealthy public opinion.

Why permit this woman-slavery, drink-slavery, to mar God's fair creation? American slavery was black and base enough, but it was innocence itself compared to the devastation, social, physical and moral, the bottle occasions. Negroes living and dying on the worst of Southern plantations, would feel themselves to be princes compared with the degraded modern sot. What then, with a woman on the throne, is the black slave more precious than the white slave, that the negro must be emancipated at all costs, while England's fame is blurred with a woman-slavery, drink-slavery, boasting a holocaust of helpless victims, thrown like logs on England's vice-dedicated altar? The burning of Indian widows in India raised a storm of righteous indignation in England; but what bloody sacrifices are permitted, nay encouraged, under English laws? The Indian widow is denied the grand distinction of sacrificing herself on her husband's funeral pyre; the English wife may, nay must, voluntarily sacrifice herself beneath the wheels of a not less senseless, not less bloody Juggernaut, in order that her husband may be at liberty to do as he likes, though he kill himself in so doing. O England!

Weeping readily over fictitious woes, the public

mind will scan the subjoined story with callous indifference; and yet does "Uncle Tom's Cabin" tell a more harrowing tale than this?—

"HORRIBLE EFFECTS OF DRINK: A WIFE AND LITTLE ONES FROZEN TO DEATH.—A few years ago a man was living with his young wife in Mankato, Minnesota. He was intelligent and successful in business, until the passion for drink enslaved him, and his business and reputation were both wrecked by its satanic influence. He was forced to seek a new home for his little family, and his wife, bred to luxury, accompanied him to the frontier in the hope that the removal from temptation would free him from the grip of the habit which cursed him. Here they lived for several years, his abstinence from drink being broken only by an infrequent and occasional debauch when he visited some of the nearest towns. Early in December he told his wife that business compelled him to go to * * *, and that he would be absent several days. She, about to be confined, with several helpless children and a scanty supply of wood, fearing that the insatiate clamour of appetite was the motive which drew him away, entreated him to stay, but in vain. He left. Soon after, one of those severe storms of December—doubly severe on the unsheltered prairie—came on. Before its close she was entirely destitute of wood, and the dreadful alternative was presented to her of passively freezing to death with her little ones, or seeking assistance from her nearest neighbor, three miles distant. She courageously chose the latter, and, leaving her three shivering little ones with nothing but a mother's yearning love and a prayerful blessing, she started out to seek relief. The next day she was found half-buried in the snow, dead, a new-born infant at her side. The three children were found dead in the house. This, whilst the once-fond husband and protecting father was away revelling in the delirium or dosing in the stupor of drink. No words can add to the horror of this tale; but beside the unspeakable agony of that dying wife and mother, how trivial our common losses, griefs, and sorrows seem!"

It is fresh in the minds of all men how England, inspired by a thrilling picture of American slavery, rose as one man and pronounced its doom. Heaven shall witness the response England makes now that one of the least of her children, for England's sake, craves mercy, salvation from her besotted sons. If it be true that the national heart to the cry of distress is like touchwood that any spark can fire, the very weakness of the present appeal, strong only in its invincible

truthfulness, may startle the nation to its depths, and evoke an active sympathy which shall stir it to its centre. Public opinion can, if it will, strike the chains of slavery from woman's intellect and heart, and make woman's emancipation the grandest trophy of Victoria's reign. Everything is possible to whole-souled men and women loyal to truth.

Victoria! Queen and mother! thy lot is lofty as Zee's is lowly; yet has she tried, as thou hast, to do well her part, and she claims with thee a common sisterhood; for in the presence of the Infinite, where all are alike poor, thou wouldst claim to be no more than woman. And if Zee's small voice, as herein expressed, could reach thee, thou wouldst, perchance, love to take her hand and call her sister. From thy feeble and voiceless daughters she would fain present to thee a petition; no loud, flaunting, illuminated scroll; no, it is written in tears and blood by those whose heads are bowed with shame and pain, not guilt; who know not whence help can come, look for it only in the grave which covers all of mortal woe. If thou couldst hear a tithe of what there is to tell of misery endured by good wives from husbands maddened by drink, thou wouldst start to thy feet with horror, exclaiming: "What! is my reign disgraced by these vices—drink, slavery, wife-slavery, greed of gold—are these scars on my brow? Why has this cry not reached me ere now? let me know the worst; it shall never be said that Victoria trifled with the sins and sorrows of her people. God forbid that I should hand down a craven soul to posterity, a constitution socially and physically leprous through the slavery of vice engendered by the selfish domination of passions indulged and sanctioned by law. Help me, my sons, England's future kings! to cleanse our loved flag from such foul and impious rust, from this evil-eyed canker-worm slavery."

An insult offered to thy sex is an insult offered to thee; woman is to be trusted with responsibility, secure it to her. In memory of Albert the Good make woman's legal freedom, full and unconditional, the crowning glory of thy reign. Oh, leave her not where thou hast found her, the slave of man's passions, the

creature of his convenience. By making thy moral power exceed thy money power, thou canst, if thou wilt, take suffering woman to thy bosom and still have room. Be thou God's gentle voice to all peoples, then shalt thou never be shorn of thy strength by a guilty dalliance with evil; but age shall find thy power undimmed and undiminished, because of a succoring hand full of compassion, not money, that thou holdest out to suffering innocence.

Save the nation from sinking lower and lower, drifting farther and farther into a whirlpool of vice, whose awful eddies are fast sucking up wealth untold, material, physical, and intellectual. Teach, oh teach, by precept and example, that there is something infinitely better than gold—truth, honor—in the word, love. There is an arm at thy side strong to save, strong to rid our loved country of her deadliest foe. Wait not till the nation's sense of right has become so embruted there is no desire to break its chains; to this we are tending, until thy throne, which should be a source of strength to its feeblest supporter, totters visibly to the far-seeing.

England's Queen! think of the little ones, that army of martyr children ever going up to God with their pitiful history. With them it is well; but what of the living, whose little hands are held up to thee appealingly? Think what impression the one word *home* conveys to the minds of such unhappy vestiges of creation! It would be one of the saddest sights ever witnessed if one dared to pick up at random, and present before thee, one hundred of the waifs under five years of age, found in any of our large cities, waifs made what they are directly or indirectly through drink and the no less culpable love of gold. No one save the drunkard and the publican, probably, would be callous enough to look on the group and not weep genuine tears. Oh, for the sake of the little ones, make woman's cause thine own, good Queen! her low, deep wail of agony must enter thy very palace.

Beside us is a raised glass dish of early spring violets, purple and white; very beautiful they are half hidden in their own green leaves. Never did shady nook

grow violets of sweeter perfume; they are to us an earnest of coming blessing. Some flowers send forth sweetest fragrance when crushed; in like manner, the hallowing influence of silent endurance may have inspired every manly heart with the firm resolve that its necessity shall cease. But if Queen and people fail us, truth is omnipotent and shall prevail. God is stronger than the devil. The superficial may incline to say how glad Zee must be to have saved her husband; but one moment's thought will convince the reader that all self-gratulation is closed against her. A thousand influences were found working together for his good the instant he chose to turn them to good account. Had Zee been faithful to her God, she would have brought those influences to bear upon him before her marriage, and have saved him to some purpose. Human nature is eminently improvable *if you go to work in the right way*. Good men and bad must be taught to stand alone, strong to bear the consequences of their own acts, good and bad, because you cannot, *cannot* save man or woman from the consequences of his or her own wrong-doing. All nature's laws impress this fact on the mind of man, too vain, alas, to learn the lesson. Besides which, if life duties are faithfully discharged, they are too fully apportioned to each being to permit anyone to do so great a wrong to another as to take his responsibilities upon himself. Thrown upon his own resources Wrax would have become a man twenty years ago; to which end Zee's friends should have united to separate her from Wrax, by putting her in the way of earning a living for herself and children when Wrax broke up his home—protecting her in so doing, of course; or if, knowing to what she committed herself, she preferred to live with Wrax (which she never would have done had a healthy public opinion prevailed on the subject), she must have accepted the consequences thereof.

The reader parts from husband and wife in exceptionally happy circumstances; they are rich in each other, and in their son, if in nothing else. As strong to bear good report as evil report, it may be told of Rex, that in building up an extensive business from

small beginnings, he has acquired a reputation in the doing of it that a prince might envy; and his one regret is that he was "not born a New Zealander" instead of an Englishman. He prefers the country to the town, but love spans the distance between himself and his parents. But full of promise as is the foreign land, true as the needle to the Pole, Zee turns ever to Albion as *home;* loving it the better for having wandered far from its shores. Still asking to die in harness, Wrax is striving so unweariedly to change the ugly inner nature into the heavenly as to fully realise the afternoon glory of a clouded noontide. Each day finds husband and wife growing nearer and dearer to each; more and more devoted to the work in hand, viz., to prove that the lions, tigers and snakes, in nature and in man, are to be trodden under foot of man by the joint discipline of health and its shadow disease; joy and its shadow sorrow—that the wisely-disciplined will, the only legitimate rule of moral government, will rejoice in free trade in all good, no less than in protection against all evil; reform yielding to the claims of right and justice rather than to brute force as heretofore.

Catching the key-note of a diviner state of being, have Zee's life-lessons, reader, helped to make your life better worth the living? If they have you will take up your cross with renewed energy and hope, and perhaps place the book itself (which should be sufficiently travel-stained to possess a salt-sea freshness, since the breezes of many lands have wafted it onwards as it kissed their shores in passing) under your pillow, with better results than Zee once did with those dog's-eared lesson-books of hers.

APPENDIX.

A Few Last Words about Auckland.

NEW ZEALAND is divided into three islands, the North, South, and Middle, of which the north is Auckland, a long straggling island, narrow enough for refreshing sea breezes to healthfully temper the midsummer's heat; the winds, indeed, east, west, north, and south, are decidedly rude occasionally. Guiltless, however, of extremes of cold and heat, its matchless climate ("the climate of the world"), vast capabilities, and great natural advantages, must ultimately make Auckland not only the metropolis of New Zealand, but the garden and recreation ground of the world likewise. Her children, fair and swarthy, may well be proud of her; she is admittedly by far the most picturesque of the New Zealand cities, with a genial clime none other can boast.

The stately Rangitoto island, with its three-coned volcanic peaks, forms at once channel and sentinel to Auckland's splendid harbor. Mount Eden and Mount Smart, situated some three and six miles inland, are the city's best sanitary commissioners, while its lungs are the Domain, a forest in miniature, retaining, with many embellishments, enough of its weird original to make its shady bowers delightfully inviting, and the Western Park, bound to grow as the city grows; to the city tree-crowned ranges, seen from all the high lands, form a rugged background. Domestic, rather than proudly majestic, the scenery is unique, new at every turn; nothing, indeed, can be more grateful to the eye than its queerly-broken, ever-varying beauty. Making art subservient to nature's imperiousness, handsome

residences, pleasantly suggestive of their unwritten histories, are built in all kinds of romantic nooks. In fact, the country is so gloriously young and undeveloped that the fingers itch to give it the form and order for which it waits. A nation is not born in a day as yet. A well-cultivated earth is of priceless value; it is common property in the best sense, so enriching the mind as to become in turn an educator, unless men are too apathetic to appropriate its lessons.

The wonderland of New Zealand are the Hot Lakes of Rotomahana, "the most marvellous volcanic region in the world," not to mention the exquisite delicacy of the fretwork, of the famed pinks, and the white terraces, over which the clear blue boiling waters flow from a huge cauldron emitting clouds of steam perpetually. And to the Hot Lakes visitors are attracted from far and near, not only by the surpassing beauty of the district, but also by the fame of its sulphur springs, which are, by nature, cooled down to any desired degree of temperature. The curative properties, especially in rheumatic and kindred diseases, of the Hot Springs of Waiwera, a charming retreat, but twenty-four miles steam from Auckland, have secured for them likewise a wide reputation. As grateful to health as to disease are their mineral waters, in which one dreads being parboiled, not without reason. An apparently exhaustless supply of hot water flows from the hills; it is utilised for a number of good baths, and the adjacent hotel affords excellent accommodation for its ceaseless stream of visitors.

Rich within, Auckland must be beautiful without, rich in herself if man's vices beggar her not. Offering every facility of wood and water for ship-building and all kinds of industries, the arts and manufactures wait on man's will. The land is rich in ores, metals, coal, and timber, woods as beautiful as durable, the pride of the artist skilled and unskilled—so perfect are they, indeed, that even nature takes long to make them. Down through all the ages she has been economising her resources, storing her wealth. Visit her laboratory if you would learn the secret of perpetual motion. Working with the fertilising sun and shower, she is

silently busy for the most part, and presently utters her benignant voice in tree and flower, among which the fern-tree bears the palm ; nothing else of its size and kind, perhaps, expresses such graceful airiness; it is a veritable witch, in its coyly sportive, redundant elegance, especially as seen from the heights above.

Delightfully broken to the eye, as are the country's chief characteristics, it is of course expensive to bring under cultivation. There are swamps in abundance, plenty of open poor land, large tracts of fern land, dense forests of rich land, and, to crown all, fine stretches of good flat land, all calling loudly for the sower and the seed. For, notwithstanding that flourishing homesteads, showing unmistakable signs of substantial prosperity, prettily dot the landscape in all directions, all New Zealand is waiting to be reclaimed. And in developing her resources much money will be made and lost, no doubt: all men cannot be winners. Learn now to divide the spoils, as brothers should share with brother.

The want of the means of communication other than water between town and country has been the settler's great drawback hitherto, but the province now possesses many miles of good roads, railroads, the electric telegraph, and steamers, too, plying constantly to and from all the principal centres of population. Hence, the settler of to-day will know comparatively little of the trials and privations of the brave pioneer settlers, and yet ignoring the price at which his present ease and comfort have been purchased, the "new chum" is often found to look with envious eye upon the possessions of the old settler, declaring "that all the good land and a fair prospect of success have been already appropriated." Childish nonsense! When the arts and industries have scarcely a recognised existence as yet, and some 7,000,000 acres of unoccupied land offer him a choice! The fact is, he wants the gods to do his work for him while he sits and smokes or sleeps, but the gods won't do it! Difficulties make the man, daunt the coward only; with a sense of perpetual growth which keeps the spirit ever young, the never-say-die resolve multiplies his re-

sources until he hits the right nail on the head. And the "new chum" must wrest success from his circumstances and surroundings, as the old settler has done; he has made his estate what it is from as raw material with greater difficulties to surmount.

It is true, as Rex has said: "Auckland offers a competency to all who are willing to earn it." *Earn* it, mark! and Rex is himself a case in point; and however much he may shrink from notoriety, he must surely have learnt before this that in so young a country one's very character is common property, as is also one's wealth, rightly appreciated. Work as manfully as Rex has done, and success of the best kind will no less certainly follow. With a strong propensity for going to the roots of things, getting as close to nature as possible, he has, to some extent, passed by the white man in his business relations, and gone to the Maori, his business being principally with the natives. His is the king's store, in fact; but his majesty uses no coat of arms.

Yes, in an out-of-the-world spot, next door to the locked-up Kawhia (king country), over which a strict ward and watch are kept by the Maoris, but a few favored Europeans being permitted to enter it, Rex has proved the possibility of building up an extensive business from small beginnings, earning, meanwhile, from both Europeans and Maoris a reputation for honor and probity which a prince might envy. His sleek team of ten or more bullocks (the road is good enough for horses now), drawing his heavily-laden American waggon, as seen once upon a time wending its way along the ill-formed roads of the unkempt wilderness, was charmingly primitive, and in keeping with its environments.

If men will but use their brains, common-sense will be found to emphasise all that may be said in favor of New Zealand (the north island especially) as a field of emigration. It is so lavishly provided with all the staple articles of merchandise, that in turning them to *good* account thousands of fortunes, if even money be *the only* consideration, will be made undoubtedly, and *with* judicious care in eating and drinking, its magnifi-

cent climate affords unbroken health for the doing of it, but it will not be done with the tooth-pick and crochet-needle.

Up to the present New Zealand joins hand with other countries quite too readily. She must be more independent, her own soil must be the home of the art, industries, manufactures—of, in short, everything lovely and of good report. If the nation is to arrive at stability, she wants the tiller of the soil, but not the tiller only. There is room, nevertheless, for some thousand additional Homestead Act proprietors (the provisions of which Act are given below). Unless willing to work for wages, all who take up land under the Homestead System should be prepared to wait three years before they reap any return beyond garden produce. Their wants will be few, however, if they can start with a few sheep, a cow or two, and poultry, for which there will be ample fodder from the first. A large number of families are living a by no means starvation life on the Homestead System. It is a hard life for the first few years, but the thought, "I am lord of the soil," sweetens every hour's toil. And so long as his home is on his land, the bread-winner may be absent, if legitimately employed, three or more months at a stretch, but he must fulfil the conditions of the Act or his grant is forfeited.

New Zealand is dull just now unquestionably. The world's tidal wave of commercial depression reached her shores to find her suffering from a financial crisis of her own, thanks to the reckless, borrowing, and spendthrift prodigality of her much too costly Government, in its insane haste to run before it could walk. But, as compared to the years of depression through which Auckland passed triumphantly a dozen years since, the present cloud is so small that she can afford to smile at the gloomy predictions of some of the home papers respecting her future.

HOMESTEAD SYSTEM.—FREE GRANTS.—Provision is made under the Act for free selection of homestead grants. Blocks are specially set apart for the purpose. The lands so dealt with are divided into first-class lands and second-class lands, according to quality, and

are so marked upon the Government plan. The area allowed each person of the age of 18 years or upwards is: of first-class lands 50 acres, or of second-class 75 acres. For persons under 18 years of age: of first-class lands 20 acres, or of second-class lands 36 acres. For each block a district surveyor, or other duly authorised officer, is appointed, and intending settlers must lodge a written application with him between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., such application to state names and ages of the applicants and describe the situation, class of land, and number of acres they have taken possession of, together with the date whereon they took possession, also to whom it is intended that a grant or grants shall issue upon fulfilment of the conditions of selection, and no application shall be received for a less area than 20 acres, and not more than 200 acres of first-class or 300 acres of second-class lands can be held or occupied by any number of persons living together in one household. The land will be allotted according to priority of application; but when two or more applications are received at the same time the ownership must be decided by lot. Every selection must, so far as the features of the country will permit, be of a rectangular form, and when fronting on a road, river, lake, or coast, be of a depth not less than three times the length of the frontage—no selection to monopolise the wood or water or landing-place in any particular locality. Under special circumstances the Waste Lands Commissioner may permit occupants to complete their selections by the purchase of adjoining lands in blocks of irregular shape and small extent. Every selector of land shall have the same surveyed at his own expense by a duly authorised surveyor, and deliver at the Waste Lands Office, within six months after taking possession, a correct certified plan. Only timber for improvements or domestic purposes may be cut without the special sanction of the Commissioner until the conditions on which the selection is made have been finally completed. At the end of the period of five years, a grant or grants shall issue for the lands selected, provided the selector has not forfeited his right thereto. The conditions to entitle to Crown

grants or conveyance are : Continuous residence on the land for five years ; the erection of a permanent dwelling-house, valued £50, within twelve months from the commencement of such residence ; annual cultivation of one-fifteenth of area selected if open land, or twenty-fifth if bush land, together with the fulfilment of conditions imposed by the Act and regulations.

SURVEYS.—(1) All surveys shall be made by surveyors authorised by the Surveyor-General, and in accordance with instructions to settlement surveyors issued, or which may be issued by him. (2) There shall be paid for the survey of any area—Not exceeding 30 acres, £5 ; exceeding 30 and up to 50 acres, 3s. per acre ; exceeding 50 and up to 100 acres, 2s. 6d. per acre ; exceeding 100 and up to 200 acres, 2s. per acre, but not less than £12 10s. ; exceeding 200 and up to 300 acres, 1s. 8d. per acre, but not less than £20. (3) Whenever two or more sections are surveyed together by the same surveyor, one-third of the above rates shall be deducted for all areas above 50 acres, and whenever all or more than one-half the length of the boundary lines shall run through vegetation less than six feet high, one-third of the schedule rates shall be deducted.

Further information as to regulations and conditions may be obtained from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Auckland, or any District Surveyor or District Land Agent. Plans of the blocks open may also be seen at the Waste Lands Office, Auckland.

LICENSES FOR CUTTING TIMBER, FLAX, AND OTHER PURPOSES.—Licenses to occupy Crown lands for any period not exceeding seven years may upon application to the Board, be obtained for cutting timber or flax, raising coal, removal of clay, sand, gravel, or stone, digging kauri gum, sites for saw mils, flour mills, tanneries, fellmongers' yards, slaughter yards, brick-kilns, potteries, ferries, jetties ; sites in thinly-inhabited districts for inns and accommodation-houses. Area of land and fee to be fixed by Board.

SPECIAL SETTLEMENTS.—The Governor sets apart blocks of rural land and declares the same open for special settlement, but the total quantity of land so

set apart in the Colony is not allowed to exceed 100,000 acres in any one year. Lands so set apart are sold at a price to be fixed by competent valuators, not being less than £1 per acre. A deposit of one-tenth the price of the block is payable, in manner directed by the Governor, within three months after deposit of survey plan with Chief Surveyor. Conditions of improvements to be defined by regulations are necessary to be performed before issue of Crown Grant. Special settlement lands cannot be set aside as such for a longer period than seven years, and if not taken up within that time may be declared open to all purchasers as ordinary Crown Lands. The Governor is empowered to contract with persons or companies agreeing to promote the settlement of persons upon such lands, and the person or companies so contracted with are bound to perform and observe the terms agreed upon. Rebate in the prices of land is allowed in respect of adult persons introduced from the United Kingdom, but the total rebate is not to exceed £20 for each statute adult, and no rebate is made until the Governor is satisfied that a number of adults have settled on the land and improved the same in conformity with the regulations.

"Retrenchment" is New Zealand's guiding star for the time being, and applied thoroughly to the Civil Service, it has done much already to restore confidence —"things are decidedly on the mend." The country is, nevertheless, so burdened with debt and taxation that an effort as persistent as manly must be made to save it from sinking deeper and deeper into debt and dishonor. A spendthrift nation is as culpable as a spendthrift individual; both are bankrupt of honor, until reasonable efforts are made to pay their debts. The European population of the provincial district of Auckland is less than 100,000 inhabitants, a mere handful of folk; but there is good stuff among them—stuff that ought to have the courage to retrench the Governor's salary at least £2,000 a-year. Retrenchment means an out-of-billet experience to many a civil servant; if you take from the lesser why not from the greater? New Zealand is forty years old as a British colony, and within that time we have contracted a debt

of £27,000,000 sterling, and the worst of it is that we have almost nothing to show for it.

Indirectly retrenchment presses heavily upon the working-man, and it is well if it does but compel him so to think and act for himself, as to prevent the political adventurer riding rough-shod to place and power, to feed hordes of hungry place-hunters at the working-man's expense, than whom no patient ass was ever more heavily burdened; and if his intelligence (intelligence is a something better than learning proper, it is that inward wrestling with right and wrong which makes a man to stand strong before his fellows) did but equal his patient endurance, he would soon make it impossible for rogues to prosper. Fight against it as one may, intelligence is bound to revolutionise the world; and then, but not till then, the communism of the New Testament will make self-aggrandisement look ugly. It will teach what brotherhood means.

Hitherto, emigration has been confined pretty much to the profligate whom friends like best at a distance, to the very poor, and to the enterprising artisan, who, demanding more elbow-room and independence of thought than England affords, leaves his own country for the good of other lands, with whom middle-class uppishness owns nothing in common. Hence, a vanity as senseless as undignified stands in the way of the "shabby genteel," who starve on their "gentility," and would, nevertheless, make good colonists and acquire an independence probably, but for the pretentiousness which keeps them rooted to the spot where they are known to have "seen better days." Faugh! Defy Mrs. Grundy, and you will find she is the meanest "calf" ever worshipped; there is absolutely nothing in her; she is the ghost of a ghost, and nothing more.

A man is not a man unless, rightly gauging the worth or the worthlessness of popular opinion on all subjects, he can dignify any and every legitimate pursuit. Such a man can afford to stand alone, and such only are welcome to New Zealand; they will make an honorable position for themselves anywhere, and such alone are worthy to help to build up a country fated to possess a free and independent people. It is scarcely

necessary to state that Auckland has churches and chapels to suit all tastes, a Museum and Institute, a Public Library, and a Young Men's Christian Association, that she is, in short, London in miniature. Thought is more active, truer, freer, therefore more refined than in England among the same class of people. Society means something more than superfine broad-cloth, satins and velvets, as the superficial soon learn to their cost.

Under protest from the clergy, who raise the war-cry —"Christianity is in danger," a purely secular system of State education maintains its place in the public favor. The Bible is excluded from the public schools, as much from respect for its worth as by the contempt into which it has been brought undeservedly by the wretched cant (supposed to be derived from its pages) often preached about "our poor human nature," —cant worse than useless except to those who make capital out of it to justify their loved sins. Human nature is not "poor" until it is made poor by cheating and lying, by confounding love and passion, and by a general selfishness as suicidal as brutish. And would you excuse these things to please the vicious, help to sink human nature lower and lower until it has no strength to recover itself? Shame!

Is "Christianity in danger" if the Bible be not read in the public schools? Not in the very least! The Church may go, Dissent may go, and but for their parade-day the world will lose little perhaps, since high above all creeds and controversies lives the Christ of history—the Ideal Man, and he shall yet be "lifted up," if not by man by woman. For the day is on the wing when our schools and halls of legislature shall resound to the loved name of Christ—when woman, strong in His energising might, shall hold Him up to the admiration and imitation of men until they desire to be like Him. Why should the best of books, the wisest of men, be banished from our schools and legislative halls? They *are* precisely the places where both (Christ and Bible) *should be* enthroned on high. Give supremacy to the *moral* and intellectual natures over the animal, in *woman* especially, and she shall yet stand on the floor

of the House and wring the common heart of the nation like a sponge—wring from it tears of blood, although it would appear to have been turned into hard cash almost. Raise woman in the scale of being, cease to chatter of our "poor human nature" mummery, and loyalty to Bible precepts, unparalleled in their exquisite beauty and usefulness, will return.

Rightly understood and appreciated *the religion of Christ is pre-eminently reasonable*, its reasonableness is assured the instant it is fairly tested; almost, if not quite, every sentence of the New Testament applies to the life that is, dogmatic theology alone is "above reason." Oh, that men would see this!

Religion is character; character is religion; to profane, to prostitute the one is to profane, prostitute the other; and to put the Bible as a school-book into the hands of many who present themselves as teachers would mean profanation simply. Besides which, religion cannot be taught by rote, parrot-fashion; the good seed must be sown in good, *i.e.*, prepared, soil if it is to bear good fruit; that is, the child must be won to a loving, reverent appreciation of all good at home, or it will never be done at school.

Patent as this is, the men who live for theology, not for fact, rebelling against the discipline of life, painful, yet needful to form the character, are as destitute of clearly-defined principles of action for their own guidance as for the guidance of others, and therefore snatch in frantic haste at any straw which offers a salve to the conscience. Hence, a cowardly attempt is made periodically to get rid of personal responsibility in the matter of training children, by throwing it upon the magic power the Bible is assumed to possess, utterly ignoring the one eternal, incontrovertible fact, stamped in unmistakable language upon all nature and all revelation from the beginning to the end—the tree is known by its fruit. By their fruit—*i.e.*, good works; good works must have a good source—ye shall know them; in other words, the parents, and the parents alone, are responsible for the child. The State (or better still, public opinion) must see that the parents do *their duty*.

Those who live for fact, not theology, know right well that, despite the "fall," there is a divinity in human nature bound to override the "total depravity" nonsense, and the creeds that fail to fit a man for the life that is, will fail to fit him for the life to come. Henceforward, to youth, to age, the life and the life alone will command the respect of men; and he who desires that his creed shall triumph must put its transcendent excellence into his business above all things, or the exquisite symmetry of the lives of many "infidels" will shame him even to himself; for his creed will be severely tested when infidels in any number live and die as did Harriet Martineau. Just think of the wretched whine the Christian often makes about dying, in his prayers and otherwise; then read "Harriet Martineau's Autobiography," and learn how an infidel can die—die with joyous anticipation, as she did, working unweariedly for others' good, even while looking certain death at any moment steadily in the face for the last twenty-one years of her life. The future is God's concern, not ours, clearly; he has blessed the life he inspired. The devil had nothing to do with such a life; compared with it the lives of the generality of men and women sink into insignificance. And yet, if religion gives an added grace and dignity to the character wholly wanting to the infidel, what kind of beings ought Christians to be? This is a question that presses upon the religious world with ever-deepening significance. It is vain to attempt to shirk it. Many among the "infidel" are like the monk of old, whom they were obliged to make into a saint because no hell could be found that would burn him.

Prompted to noble endeavor by the wisdom, and want of wisdom of past ages, young Auckland ought to be in every respect a very model, socially, breathing so pure an atmosphere that indolence and vice could not live in it; and yet, alas! imitating, instead of profiting by, the pauper-making blunders of the old world, she *is rushing* blindfolded on the self-same fatal rocks in *dealing* with the idle and dissolute. She takes their *children* from them, and allows the parents to go free

to spend the greater part of their time in gaol, making wrong-doing a gain to them, not a loss. Thus she teaches the not-over industrious, who abound everywhere, to say, unblushingly : "Why should I slave for my children while your idle fellows' children are well cared for by the public ? The public may have my children and welcome." And his family presently swell the number of outcast children, of course. In addition to her Orphan Asylum, Auckland has a Home of considerably more than 100 (the number increases year by year) of neglected and destitute children, hanging as an incubus round her neck.

If children are destitute and neglected, her duty is with the parents clearly, not with the children ; to make the parents work, not to take their children from them. If the parents determine that themselves and their children shall be maintained at the public expense, provide some kind of an institution possessing more home-like reformatory influences than any gaol affords, make it self-supporting, work or starve being the only alternative offered to them ; but on no account separate parent and child, if the entire family must be cared for. Children often have a humanising influence even on the most depraved. Public opinion would soon popularise such an institution, and men would soon learn better than to subject themselves to its righteous conditions. Victoria, a young colony, has already fifteen hundred neglected and destitute children to provide for. What is meant by the much-vaunted "liberty of the subject ?" Liberty to do the right and the right only: a man voluntarily sacrifices his liberty the instant he chooses to do wrong. Never encourage indolence. Work is good for everyone. It is a sin to help anyone to shirk self-imposed duties. Every man's right to do as he likes ceases if the rights of another are infringed thereby. Once practically accept this self-evident fact, and no insuperable difficulties will arise in dealing with the idle and dissolute. As opposed to the present system of herding children together, the lauded "Boarding-out system" is only a lesser evil.

There are so many just claims pressing upon the time and means of the man who faithfully discharges

his duty to his family and to the State, that to expect him to toil to support the idle and their progeny likewise is monstrous. The necessity, nevertheless, of a Poor Law for New Zealand has been strongly urged on the attention of the House.

It is not surprising that the Englishman should have blundered in his treatment of the savage abroad when he has so long blundered in his treatment of the savage at home. Indeed, it is believed with reason that man has yet to learn the right way of doing everything in relation to his social well-being. *And woman will be his teacher.* He unwittingly cut off his right hand, plucked out his right eye, when he refused to accept woman as "helpmeet."

Those who best know the marked individuality of the Maori character—his keen sense of honor in word and deed, and his proud self-reliance—feel assured he was capable of being treated as a man, when his allegiance was first accepted by England's Queen. But, unfortunately, the question of sovereign and subject was never clearly defined to the native mind, and never will be while he meets with so much from the representatives of the Crown to create distrust, so little to command respect and confidence. The tribe, being greater than the individual to the Maori, he cannot comprehend the all-for-self greed of the European; hence, while fully appreciating his superior advantages, material, social, and political, as man for man, the Maori feels himself the white man's equal, if not his superior in native strength of character, and is willing, as a man should be, to accept the advantages enjoyed by the privilege of race, as a right, not as a favor.

That, if strong enough, they would disclaim British rule, and assert their own independence, is certain; but being quick imitators, the lower-class Maories have too readily adopted the baser, not the better, habits of the European, and the drunken, immoral, and improvident habits of the natives are so grievously decimating the race, that is doubtful whether in any circumstances the Waikatos (Auckland natives) could bring 1,000 *fighting*-men into the field.

They have their rights (none too willingly conceded), and claim them in Maori fashion, not unnaturally with a show of bluster, not without European precedent. They are, nevertheless, most peacefully inclined, living quietly and breaking up large areas of land for wheat, oats, corn, potatoes, etc. The number of natives now living in New Zealand (the three islands) is estimated at 43,000, and they still hold about 14,000,000 acres of land, of which some seven or eight millions are in the provincial districts of Auckland; but the estate is being purchased by the Government as rapidly as possible. The natives can make no use of it.

Distrustful, with sufficient reason perchance, of the kindly intentions of the white man, the natives do not avail themselves as they should of the means of education for their children, although they eagerly avail themselves of the implements of industry and of destruction offered. But the question: "Aren't you afraid of the natives?" meets only a most amused smile from the European. Treat them fairly, and there is absolutely nothing to fear from them. They are as trustful as those who have never known deceit, but they are not easily twice gulled by the same man.

Living far from the haunts of the pakeha, accepting few favors and no bribes, the Maori king (Tawhiao) still preserves his stoical isolation, rarely choosing to cross, with his retinue, the border-land of his own country and that of the white man, whose existence, indeed, save that of a few favored beings, he scarcely deigns to recognise. It is much to be regretted that no means have as yet been adopted to break down the barriers which separate the two races; the pity is, rather, that the white man should appear to play shark-turn-cannibal when the aboriginal blocks his path—that the aboriginal should retire, and retire until he vanishes out of sight. Still, that the native must go is due only in part to the self-aggrandisement of the white man, however inordinate. The Maoris' death-warrant is signed by the stolid indolence he maintains to a culpable degree, notwithstanding that he digs and plants now as he used not to do. There

is room for both races in New Zealand; but if the natives would live and flourish as they ought to do, their resistance to the encroachments of the pakeha must spring from within; self-respect must fire their energies, and so animate and sustain their enthusiasm as to prompt them to work, not to talk, merely—as so prone to do—to seize the plough, the spade, the pen with a self-reliance which, rightly directed, never will be driven to the wall. All men, even to the Maori, must stand on their own merits, unless they are content to be things, not men.

Maori land has not yet been turned inside out and upside down until there is nothing in it, as has the old world; hence it were much to be desired that an educated Maori or half-caste would write a book with quaint originality. That the natives love war and fight well—the offshoots of abounding life, clearly prove that they possess within themselves the elements of growth when once they turn their energies to the conservation of the forces at their command.

Strike out with the pen, friend Maori, introduce us to the higher, diviner side of your race; you can open a sealed book, crack for us a nut which may have a sweeter kernel than we wot of. You can dash your effusions with some humor, too, since on paper you will be allowed to ride roughshod to your possessions beyond the sun, and into the white man's glass-house, which sorely needs a spring clean. Culture should make the child of nature, whose angularities of character contrast favorably with the sleek courtliness of the pakeha, the more intensely Maori; that the rugged force of his native fire and poetry may possess something of the ocean's restless might, toned down, whiles, to the lazy ripple of the shallow brook.

And, friend, since you have a head on your colossal shoulders, invite your kin to take a seat, get them off their haunches (the natives squat), and lead them forth with a dignity in keeping with your grand old hills, lead fearlessly by your own forest tracks; give prominence to the flowers of form and fancy which adorn your primeval wilderness. And if we of the white skies mistake your sweet-briar for stinging-nettle, or

should stumps and tangle trip us up, we'll "rub noses" and start afresh. For so unparalleled is the healthfulness of its climate and the loveliness of its scenery, that New Zealand cannot fail to stamp its unique characteristics on its children, of the white skin and the swarthy.

To this moment the Maori king and kingites refuse to be bought, very properly, refuse to be toyed with as harmless infants; the force of circumstance will, nevertheless, be too strong for them; hence, instead of the king's present dog-in-the-manger attitude in reference to the land, he will, it is hoped, be proud to be accepted as the Queen's ambassador to her Maori people, and throw his land open like a man. A pakeha, possessing his majesty's confidence, writes privately: "I sat up with him (the king) nearly all last night (10 May, 1880), talking of one thing and another. I told him of the proposed Panama Canal; he seemed to think it an extraordinary idea, reverting to it two or three times during the evening. He said: 'You English are a wonderful people. I suppose if you wanted to cut a canal from the North Cape to Wellington it would be only a question of money!'"

Ah, those irresponsible bodies—governments Imperial and Colonial—may well mourn over wasted blood and treasure; the grievous task of blotting out the signs of the late war's spoliation are not yet accomplished. The lesson should have its value. Employing native labor largely when the Maori's allegiance was first accepted by the Queen, an army of soldiers in the form of navvies should have been sent from England to this country to make roads through its length and breadth; the country would then have been opened up from end to end; and thus defied, its tawny sons, capable of exemplary loyalty to respected authority, would doubtless have become devoted subjects of the Queen. But moved by a jealousy, vulgar as costly, England is prone to take offence if her breeze-and-battle-braving flag is snubbed by a handful of Maories or Zulus. How much her penny-wise and pound-foolish policy has cost her! and its returns are—What?

New Zealand has her one statesman, and he stands out in grand relief to the many who buzz around him. A man possessing a clearly-defined purpose, and daring to take the unpopular side, because strong in the autocracy of right against might; a divinely noble imperiousness, than which nothing in the universe may dare to be less compromising. A man who has worked, will work, at all costs for New Zealand's ultimate prosperity, in the teeth of an ignorant conservatism that seeks its own, and only its own. A man whose every act quietly appeals to the disinterestedness of an exceptionally consistent life—a life necessarily misunderstood by those rejoicing in the dead level of characterless inanity which obtains, and are impatient of the restraints right principles impose on the unscrupulousness of a charlatanism that accuses itself in the very excuses it offers. Charlatanism possesses no sense of honor; its dignity is comprehended in "cutting off the nose to spite the face." It is contrary to the very nature of things for gross selfishness to build up national honor. Men always act consistently with themselves whatever be their professions, a fact overlooked when disappointment is expressed at the seeming inconsistencies of men, as purposeless as characterless; human shuttlecocks veering east, west, north, and south, in opinion as often as differences of opinion are presented to them. Men possessing much general information who have, nevertheless, to digest the unpalatable fact, patent to the thoughtful, that there is a something better than the best developed reasoning, good though that is, and that something is—character, nobly formed and clearly defined.

New Zealand's one statesman is Sir George Grey, of course. He stands alone because he is peerless—brave, self-immolated man. It is not his fault that he "stands alone," although a cause of reproach. He would appear, indeed, almost too willing to work with such tools as come to hand (good work cannot be done with bad tools), almost too willing to throw sops to political hounds apt to grow surly on short commons. Sir George Grey sees that these glad isles, this garden of the

world, has enough and to spare for all her sons, and for all who may yet tread her shores, if they will but do their part like men of honor. The natives, except perhaps a few, who have been prejudiced against him by self-seeking Europeans, trust Sir George instinctively; he has proved himself their truest friend, and they speak of him as "the man without pride."

For more than twenty years the writer, an utter stranger to him, has watched his public career with ever-increasing interest; it is, indeed, scarcely possible to estimate what New Zealand owes to him. If he will use his strength with long-suffering patience, the man of character and purpose is stronger than the thousand human whiffs, though the blundering stupidity of the latter greatly retards his usefulness; the strong have so to bear the infirmities of the weak as to remove them.

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